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THOMPSON, T P

DEDICATION.

IN recognition of his authority as DICTATOR OF THE REFORM PARTY, whose favourable opinion is absolutely necessary in order to secure political advancement, this able work is dedicated to the

HONORABLE GEORGE BROWN,

by one of his most faithful and implicit supporters, in the hope that the latter may ultimately be enabled to secure by means of his influence a position as Emigration Agent to Great Britain, and in the meantime a gratuitous advertisement in the columns of the *Globe*,

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D. B.,

Graduate of Cobococonk University.

Toronto, July, 1873.

P. S. He wouldn't give me the advertisement.

J. B.

PREFACE.

I believe it is customary on the issuing of a book of the importance which characterizes this Canadian classic, for the author to address a few words to the public by way of preface, explaining his motives and defining his position. My position is readily definable as impetuous and my motives are correspondingly acquisitive. These letters were originally written for the Coboconk *Irradiator*—a paper which has in consequence become a *vade mecum* in every Canadian household—and systematically plagiarized from its chaste columns by the *Mail*. The public were at first slow to accept the existence of the University of which I have the honor to be a graduate, the *Irradiator* newspaper and even the village of Coboconk itself, as a fact, and even yet there may be found occasional hardened sceptics as to the two former, so difficult is it for the light of truth to permeate the darkened intellect. Upon this point I will merely observe that if there had been no such institution as Coboconk University I could not by any possibility have graduated there as a D. B. and that if the *Irradiator* were a myth of the imagination, the *Mail* would have been unable to extract these epistolary gems from its pages. This consideration should be sufficient to satisfy the most incredulous. In response to the demands of a discrimina-

tive public I have thought fit to preserve this correspondence in permanent form, and if one Tory should thereby be brought to a realizing sense of the superiority of Gritism and the virtue of Brown, Mackenzie and McKellar, if one struggling soul should be sustained through life's wilderness-journey by the exuberance of its poignant humorisms, and above all if the sale thereof should result in an influx of shekels, the object of this little book will have been attained—Trusting that at no distant day the conventionalism will truthfully express my position, I sign myself.

The public's obedient servant,
JIMUEL BRIGGS D. B.
Graduate of Coboconk University

Toronto, July 1873.

LETTER I.

Appointment as Special Commissioner—Interview with McKellar—
The Elgin Association Business Explained—Solicits a Ticket for
the Grit Guzzle—Mysterious Connection between Wheelbarrows
and Champagne—Hasty Termination of an Interview.

YOUR favour appointing me your special Commissioner at Toronto was duly received.

As I have since leaving the University (by the back door in order to avoid attention by over obsequious creditors), been in my usual condition of chronic impecuniosity, the appointment was truly welcome.

It is true the pecuniary inducements were not such as to call up visions of the wealth of Golconda—whoever he was—in fact, my position much resembles that lately held by the Hon. E. Blake, a “Minister without a portfolio,” so to speak.

By the way, what does a Minister want a portfolio for anyway?

But the incidental advantages are an object. I am now a full-fledged member of the press.

In that capacity I have during the last week attended four Sunday school tea meetings and three concerts, besides being the recipient of innumerable free drinks.

This you will perceive reduces my living expenses almost to a minimum.

As there was nothing much else doing yesterday, I thought I would interview Mr. McKellar respective to the Elgin Association business.

So I went to the Parliament buildings, and enquired for the able-bodied Commissioner of Agriculture.

An aide-de camp, or Usher of the Black Rod or something of the sort who stood in the ante-chamber, diligently occupied in spitting at the fire place, said he was engaged, and would I take a chair and wait.

I took a chair and waited.

Presently a man emerged from the ministerial presence and I asked if I could go in.

"Do you want to see him on business connected with the Department of Agriculture," said the Usher of the Black Rod.

"Nothing else, I sententially murmured.

"Thought so, said he.

"Why so, said I.

"Because of your appearance. You have a turn-up nose and carrotty hair, and look like a beat, remarked the unfeeling wretch.

I did not reply to the sarcasm, but entered the sanctum sanctorum, and prostrated myself before the great representative of the Agricultural interest.

He was reclining in an easy chair perusing "What I know of Farming. A mammoth potato lay upon

his desk and several pamphlets on sub-soil, ploughing, drainage and such like subjects lay around loose.

He received me urbanely, and motioned me to a seat on a file of the *Canada Farmer*.

"Well sir," said he, "what can I do for you?"

"I am connected, your highness, with the press."

"Cheese press?"

"No, your excellency, the noblest of all pursuits—the art preservative of all arts—the Archimedean lever which moves the world—the pen which is mightier than the sword."

He said he had previously heard something to that effect.

"Well, sir, I come in my capacity as a journalist to enquire how the El——"

"Stop sir, I am a moral man and object to these cursory remarks. I allow no swearing in this office. In fact I have established a rule that any of the clerks indulging in that vice, shall pay a fine to go towards the Reform fund of which I am the custodian. So no swearing if you please."

"Excuse me Mr. McKellar, but you took me up too quickly. Allow me to proceed. What I meant to ask was, how the Elgin Association disposed of their funds?"

"How should I know?—I was never an agent of theirs."

"But *The Mail* says you were."

"D——is believe *The Mith*. I ought to know whether I was or not. It is all a mistake, 'Some horrid blunder has been made,' as the poet sings. Here's how it happened. King introduced me to the British public as *a gent* soliciting subscriptions for the Association, hence the mistake. Merely a clerical error."

"Ha, ha! Yes, *clerical* error. King being a clergyman. I see. Very good."

So saying, I bowed myself out of the bacolic presence and took my departure.

"Wonder what that confounded fool was after," observed the Usner of the Black Rod, as I made my exit.

INTERVIEW WITH MCKELLAR.



"Another two dollars to be deducted from your salary for swearing," said McKellar, who had overheard him. "The Reform Fund is rapidly increasing."

McKellar is great on funds. In fact his *pro-fund-ity*, is something astonishing. Classic humorism!

The interview was a success. The information elicited, places McKellar's connection with the affair in an entirely new light.

Having heard that there is shortly to be a great Grit guzzle in the Music Hall, I resolved to secure a ticket.

So I called at the office of N. Gordon Bigelow, the urbane and polished Secretary—whom I found overwhelmed with the cares of office.

"You are Secretary of the Reform Committee relative to the approaching guz — — banquet, I should say?"

"Yes, sir, he responded eyeing me sternly.

"I am a member of the press; an institution, sir, which ranks second to none in importance, which has changed the destinies of nations, and—"

"Yes! yes! I know all about that. You want a ticket for the banquet, I suppose?"

I suggested that the "usual courtesies" would meet my views.

"Well, I suppose we'll have to put you on the list," said he, handing me the coveted pasteboard. "It's going to be a great affair. One thousand

guests expected, and over a hundred baskets of champagne ordered—more than a bottle for each man besides other beverages,"

"Why not—to the victors belong the spoils," said I, quoting the well-known Jacksonian aphorism.

"And now," said the Secretary, "please excuse me I have to attend a meeting of the Sub-committee on Cabs, Hand-carts, and Wheel-barrows."

"Excuse my apparent pertinacity, but what in thunder have cabs, hand-carts and wheel-barrows to do with a banquet?"

"Didn't I just now tell you," said the Secretary with a pitying smile at my obtuseness, "that we had ordered a hundred baskets of champagne. The connection must be obvious to the meanest intellect."

"Oh I see the point. But why these gradations of rank in a free country? Will not the citizen who has paid for his ticket and is conveyed to his domicile in the unpretentious wheel-barrow, exposed to the public gaze, rankle with envy at his neighbour who rolls luxuriously home in a bloated carriage?"

"Party standing and services in the cause are entitled to recognition. The cabs are for M.P.'s only the hand-carts for Aldermen and ward politicians such as Hallam, Bugg, *et hoc genus omne*, and the wheel-barrows for the small fry."

"In which class do you include the press? Excuse my detaining you, but I have a personal interest in the question."

"If they are good Grits they will be looked after by the wheel-barrow department. The police will take care of the Tories."

The Secretary rose to go. "Stay a second," I exclaimed. "I have an idea. Let's compromise."

"How so?"

"You say that over a bottle of champagne is provided for each guest, besides substantials and other beverages. Now, a bottle of champagne alone costs two dollars. I am bound to have my share of the wine, and a good square meal into the bargain. Give me two dollars cash and I won't go. You'll make by it, I assure you."

The Secretary's comments on this very reasonable suggestion are not of a nature for publication. Suffice it to say that had he been a clerk in the Department of Agriculture, the augmentation of the Reform Fund in consequence would have sufficed to purchase McKellar a new suit of clothes.

He terminated his somewhat Calvinistic remarks by inviting me out of his office—as I left presenting my most stern expression, he tendered me his foot

I declined the tender. I did not want to be any tenderer—not at all.

I got ahead of him on the ticker anyhow. *Fortuna favet audax*, which is Latin.

This quotation does not hold good in cricket. Fortune don't favour the bowled.

With which sparkling humorism I close.

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D. B.,

Graduate of Cobocok University.

Toronto, Nov. 7, 1872.

POLITICAL EXPERIENCES

LETTER II.

Interview with the Premier—Mowat's Views on the Situation—
Surreptitious Information—Wood sent for—The Head of the
Party Indignant—Brown's Advice to a Youthful Politician—
Jinnel's Dissolution—Two kinds of Wood—Despair and Consola-
tion.

Editor Coboconk Irradiator :—

LAST week I forwarded you the details of my interview with the Chief of the Department of Agriculture and Public Works and yesterday, in accordance with your instructions, I went to see Mowat, in order to send a report in time for Saturday's issue.

I had some difficulty in obtaining an interview, as a great many people were hanging about.

"Is the Premier—that noble and self-sacrificing man, who quitted the calm, unruffled functions of the bench at the call of duty and the Lieut. Governor, to mingle once more in the stormy arena of politics—round," I enquired of one of the clerks.

"What do you mean by such insolence," he responded, in an outraged voice. "Your inquiry brands you as a Tory of the deepest dye. Get out of here."

"Why this outburst of indignation?" I meekly asked in a conciliatory tone. "My observations were meant to be complimentary. I am a representative of the Reform press."

"You enquired," said he, somewhat mollified, "if the Premier was round. This is a gross reflection on his character for honesty and straightforwardness as a *square* man cannot be *round*. Q.E.D."

"True," said I, "I spoke colloquially rather than mathematically. Is he in?"

"He is." And the clerk relapsed into the perusal of the *Globe*, which probably accounts for his mental imbecility.

Finally my turn came, and I stood before the Ex-Vice-Chancellor.

"I came to ask you," said I, "how about the situation?"

"You are the thirteenth man," said he, with some vexation, "who has come bothering about situations to-day. There are no vacancies at present, nor likely to be any. We have a lot of Sandfield's old nominees here yet, and we can't turn them off suddenly, out of deference to public opinion. We have to weed them out one by one.

"If we were only in the States now we could manage things differently, but we have not yet succeeded in moulding public opinion in favour of rotation in office. That Peachie business at Brantford raised such a fuss we have to proceed very cautiously. *Festina lente*." This, in the noble tongue of the ancients, means "go slow."

"But me lud," said I, giving him his judicial title, "the situation I referred to was the political aspect.

I am no office-seeker, though should the Reform Party choose to reward my eminent services with an official position, I should probably follow an illustrious example and descend to its acceptance. But what I came for was information."

"Well," said he, "the cause is flourishing—Cameron can't command a dozen votes—the country is safe in the hands of able administrators. That is all I have to communicate. Good morning."

I could have found out that much by reading the *Globe*.

It didn't satisfy me, so I loafed around to see what news I could pick up. I wasn't going to be put off with such commonplace remarks as those.

Presently Mowat passed out.

I followed like a sleuth-hound on the trail.

He met a clerk in the doorway and said in a low tone: "*Did you send for Wood as I ordered?*"

Ha! A discovery!

"Not yet," replied the clerk.

"*Then do so immediately or we shall be out.*"

There could be no doubt as to the meaning of this conversation.

Wood feeling himself slighted, was about to go into opposition with his friends and overturn the Government.

Mowat had sent for him to offer him a seat in the Cabinet.

A further remark which Mowat dropped confirmed my conclusions.

I hastened off to forward you the news.

On my way down town I met Brown near the *Globe* office, and concluded to ask him for further details.

He smiled urbanely upon me. Brown likes to encourage young men of strenuous Reform tendencies.

"Mr Brown" said I, "you can perhaps tell me what office Wood is to have."

"Hoot, laddie, he's na gaun to hae ony. We canna weel trust a mon wha has once betrayed the pairty,"*

"But I had it from Mowat himself. He sent for him a minute ago and said he was afraid the Government would go out if things were not fixed."

"Guid save us—an Mowat dared to send for the traitor without consulting Me—the head o' the pairty. Hech mon, but the ingratitude o' these upstairs is awfu'. Come into the office and tell me a' about it."

So saying he rushed into the *Globe* building in a state of great excitement, whirling his arms about in a rantic manner.

"Aweel, aweel, wha wad ever hae thocht it after a' the trouble I hae had wi' yon chiel Blake, wha was aye wanting in respect and deference to Me that pit him in his posection, noo to hae Mowat disregard. ing my instructions. But I'll let them see. You are quite certain noo of what you her d?"

"Oh yes sir—and more than that, Mowat went on to say that Wood was in accord with their sentiments.

*This was before Wood had been named.

I didn't quite catch the remark, but it was something about 'accord' anyhow."

"Well I'm muckle obleeged to ye for the information. Just to think o' the graceless loons not even sending the news to the *Globe*. Gang roun' till Mowat's office again an' see gin ye can hear onything mair. I maun find oot a' about it, an' if ye can help us your reward will be——"

"Name it, oh generous man!" I exclaimed, enthusiastically, "and my utmost exertions shall be devoted to the effort."

"Your reward shall be the proud consciousness o' having served the interests o' the Great Reform party!"

My enthusiasm at once fell to zero.

"I always like to encourage the young in the path of duty," continued the Honourable George, "and if ye can be o' sairvice, I wad no say but some day we might gie ye a posection on the *Globe*."

"We've been unco fashed to get the news frae Ottawa sin Hubertus left us, an' if ye're guid at sic wark an' can thole a muckle sound drabbin' now and again we might send ye there."

"Thank you sir," said I, reanimated by the prospect, "I'll do my best."

"Noo young man let me just gie ye a piece o' advice whilk may aiblins be o' use till ye. Whatever betides always be true to the pairty as represented by the *Globe*. Look at the fate o' them wha hae forgotten

their principles an' bood the knee to the Baal o' corruption at Ottawa. Look at Howland for instance ; puir deevil, see what he's come to."

"Yes, I of en look at him ; \$8,000 a year, a carriage, a hundred thousand dollar house and little work to do. But," I hastily added, seeing that I was on the wrong tack, "what, oh what are all these advantages to a man who carries in his bosom the consciousness of having betrayed his principles, sold himself to the enemy and proved false to the best interests of humanity, which is the *Globe*."

That fetched him—he smiled more benignantly than ever—and placing a dollar in my palm, said, "You are a mon o' principle. Go ; be wary and watchful, and come to me as soon as you have found out anything."

"Rely on me," said I, "I will never betray the cause."

I hurried back to the Premier's office.

I didn't go in ; I wasn't sure of a cordial reception, so I lounged about the corridor.

Presently a man entered and asked if the Premier was in. I guess he took me for one of the clerks seeing I was doing nothing.

I determined to keep up the delusion in order to pump him.

"No sir," said I, "but, perhaps, I can attend to your business."

"He sent for Wood this morning," said the man.

"He did. He did!" I answered, trembling on the verge of expectancy.

"I came to make proposals to him."

"Ah! you are a friend of Wood's."

"Friend of Wood? I am in the business, if that's what you mean."

"Business! What business?"

"Why, the wood business, of course! You must be a fool. He said they were nearly out." Thus vanished into thin air the bright and beauteous fabric of my vision, like the mirage of the desert before the fainting traveller.

No Government secret discovered; no great man's favour secured; no position on the *Globe*; astonishment, despair, a rapid retreat, a speedy liquefaction of Mr. Brown's dollar, and grateful oblivion more profound than that of Lethe.

All because the name of an ex-Minister is identical with the designation of ligneous fuel.

Moral, slightly altered from popular proverb—
"Don't holler till you're sure of the Wood."

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D.B.,

Graduate of Coboconk University.

Peronto, Nov. 15, 1872.

OF JIMUEL BRIGGS.

LETTER III.

The "Policy of Slander"—Jimuel Accused of Swindling—His Able Defence—Rev. W. King—Visits the Treasury Department—Conversation with Crooks—Lubricating the Government Machine—Surplus Distribution—A Half-Hearted Measure—Radical Principles Ignored.

I N common with those other noble moral Reformers, Messrs. McKellar and King, I have become the victim of the policy of Slander.

The last issue of your depraved Tory contemporary the Coboconk *Progressionist*, contains a copy of the following letter, the baseless nature of the assertions contained in which are at once apparent:—

"Coboconk, Nov. 18th.

"Mr. JIMUEL BRIGGS, D. B.,

"Toronto—

"SIR,—It is now more than three months since you resigned your position as Treasurer of the Coboconk Reform League, yet hitherto you have failed to render any account of the balance, amounting to \$21. 62½, remaining in your hands. I have repeatedly written and telegraphed you respecting the matter, but you have not as yet taken any notice of my communications. Unless the amount is handed over forthwith, we shall be reluctantly obliged to resort to legal proceedings for its recovery.

"Yours, &c.,

"D. EDBETE,

"Sec. Reform League."

The literary ruffian who perpetrates the *Progressionist* also gives a leading article accusing me of "obtaining money under false pretences," "swindling," &c.

But such is ever the fate of those who have unselfishly exerted themselves in the cause of humanity.

In order to justify my course and set myself right before the public, it will be necessary to refer to the period before Confederation.

At that time the Reform Party were striving to overthrow a corrupt and demoralized Coalition, and, true to the immutable principles of civil and religious liberty, united to secure the object of Rep. by Pop.

At great personal sacrifice I devoted myself to the cause.

I neglected important business engagements and plunged into the thickest of the fray.

I personated two absent voters and treated others to the extent of several dollars, though the Reform Committee afterwards basely ignored my claims for remuneration.

Notwithstanding this discouragement, I did not for an instant swerve in my allegiance to the Reform cause.

I had tried the Tories before, and they wouldn't see me.

I was sure that the right would finally triumph. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit.* Classic quotation.

When the great object for which we had yearned

and striven was finally accomplished, when, owing to the exertions of George Brown and the Reform Party when the continent of British North America was united under the red cross banner, when the East hailed the West with the voice of gladsome salutation, the glorious Canadian Beaver, the emblem of our new Dominion, ascending the highest summit of the Rocky Mountains, shrieked aloud his lofty pæans of victory and sounded the death knell of effete and degenerate Toryism.

Is any further argument needed to show how utterly futile are the charges brought against me in a spirit of vengeful and malignant animosity?

I think not. My answer to this unfounded and brutal accusation is as complete and logical as that of Rev. Mr. King in reference to the Elgin Association business.

Day before yesterday I again slung my nimble look towards the Parliament Buildings, and dropped in on Crooks.

"The king was in his parlour counting out his money," in the familiar words of one of the lays of joyous childhood, when cocktails were undreamed of, and cigars away in the dim vista of futurity.

I thought I would assume a careless familiar tone with him, and let him see I felt at ease in his society.

Since I have become the central figure in the "latest outrage," my political and social importance has increased.

"Morning, Crooksey," said I, poking him in the ribs with a knowing wink—"How does the old thing work?"

He looked kind of surprised and said "Excuse me, but I hardly understand you."

"How's the machine running, old rooster? It ought to go pretty smoothly I guess."

"Why—what do you mean?"

"Because you *ile it* (Islet)."

This was merely one of my brilliant humorisms which spring up in my conversation as naturally as the flowerets in May.

Crooks didn't seem to appreciate it however.

"Clear out you insolent scoundrel," he violently exclaimed. "How dare you insult me in this manner? Begone, or I'll—I'll—"

"Yes," said I; "be sure and remember the *ile*. As I previously observed *Islet*."

He foamed with rage and shouted for his aide-de-camp.

I read his purpose. He wanted him to aid me to decamp.

I turned to go, saying, "Well, if this is the way in which you treat your constituents when they call to see you on business, I shan't take the same interest in future elections in West Toronto, that I have previously done."

His manner changed in an instant. The frown which clouded his manly brow like a thunder cloud

resting upon an Alpine summit disappeared, and he shook me cordially by the hand.

"My dear sir," said he, "excuse my temporary irritation at your harmless little pleasantries, and my failure to remember your eminent services during my election campaign."

I readily excused him, because I fail to remember them myself.

"By the way, you must find your recent change of office an agreeable one," said I, when the *entente cordiale* had been completely restored.

"Taking care of the Provincial exchequer, and hearing the frequent clink of gold and silver, and the rusting of the V's and X's, thick as the fallen leaves of autumn, must be far more pleasant and congenial than the study of Blackstone and Story, and pouring over many a curious volume of forgotten lore."

"I find it so," said he; "the financial department is undoubtedly the most important in the national economy, and yet there are narrow and grovelling minds who hesitate not to assert that I have made a descent in accepting my present position."

"You surprise me," said I. Why, the administration of the finances is rightly considered one of the noblest of governmental functions. In fact it approaches more nearly the sacred duties of the clergy than any other."

"How so?" enquired Crooks.

"Because you have to look after your *surplus* (surplice)" was my epigrammatic response.

He smiled, and said I was a man of discernment.

"What I wished more particularly to see you about," said I, "was the surplus Distribution Scheme. How is it progressing?"

"Oh, we are hard at work on it," said he, "it will be developed early in the session."

And when shall I be able to draw?"

"Draw what?"

"Why, my share of the surplus."

"I'm afraid you are under a great misapprehension," he replied. "The surplus will be distributed to counties, not to individuals."

"Oh," I said as a feeling of disappointment crept over me, "that's the idea is it. But why these cowardly half measures, this abnegation of true Radical principles. If the hitherto acknowledged functions of Constitutional Government, which the Tories prate of, are to be so far abandoned, out of deference to nineteenth century progress and enlightenment, as to delegate to the municipalities the disposal of the public funds, why not advance a step further and recognise the rights of individuals?"

He said he had never looked at the question in that light, but would mention it to Brown and Mowat and see what could be done.

"I hope this noble Reform can be accomplished," said I, as I quitted his presence. "Remember, sir, that that the Argus-eyes of a free and unshackled press the guardians of the people's liberties, are upon you,

and that nothing short of the fullest development of Radical principles will satisfy them. So-long Crooksey.'

This so-called Liberal Government aint half liberal enough.

Such base and sordid compromise with the spirit of Toryism, as displayed in this half-hearted Surplus Distribution scheme, may well discourage the true friends of progress.

But, alas! alas! how oft in this cold and heartless world is principle subordinated to the selfish dictates of personal aggrandizement! *Quærenda pecunia primum virtus post nummos.*

If you meet the erudite boss of the University sloshing around, don't fail to point out to him how his former pupil—which is me—does honour to his *Alma Mater* by the apt felicity of his classic quotations.

By the way—please send me the promised remittance by return mail. Be sure to attend to it,

In the words of the ancient moralist, "*Do write and fear not.*"

—JIMUEL BRIGGS, D. B.,

Graduate of Cobocoak University

Toronto, Nov. 20th.

POLITICAL EXPERIENCES

LETTER IV.

Remittance received—A varicious Landlord—The Bummer's Roost—The Timber Policy—A Notorious Government—The Celtic race—An Irishman who didn't appreciate Humor.

Editor Coboconk Irradiator :

I DULY received yours of the 26th inst., enclosing remittance which consisted of a pass on the Toronto and Nipissing Railway.

There is doubtless considerable force in your suggestion that the pass being worth \$5 is more than an equivalent for the \$4 you owe me.

Still, upon the whole, I would have preferred the cash.

The landlord of the Bummer's Roost, the first-class hotel where I now board, is of the same opinion.

When I presented him with the document in part payment of my bill, he gazed at me with loftiest scorn depicted on his classic lineaments and sneeringly asked what in thunder did I suppose he could do with that.

I suggested that he might relinquish for a while the cares of business and take a trip up north by way of relaxation.

I told him I would assist in tending bar during his absence and not charge him a cent.

To this kindly meant advice he replied by recommending me to relax my system by taking a trip down South—a long way down.

In fact the tenor of his remarks during the balance of the conversation was so purely theological that they would be out of place in a strictly secular journal.

The Bummer's Roost is one of our most aristocratic hotels. I went there to board a short time since so I could have regular meals.

This depending upon free lunches and Sunday school tea-meetings for sustenance is all very well in its way, but rather precarious.

They have napkins at table, and a gong, with a swarthy child of Afric to pound upon it. His execution is remarkably brilliant.

Possibly the hash is susceptible of improvement but the gong is superb and soul-thrilling.

Oft have I listed to its majestic, permeating tones—now pealing like the thunder crashing over some mountain peak; now low and plaintive as the breath of signing zephyr; now roaring like the foaming cataracts of Niagara, and rippling into melody like the cadence of a murmuring streamlet.

I always did cultivate my descriptive talent.

Several members of the Local Legislature stay here during the session.

McKellar formerly boarded here, but he left some time since.

The landlord told him he was very sorry, but as he

was a poor lone widower with only his character to depend on, he really couldn't accommodate him any longer.

Since he left, the spoons and things don't seem to wear out so fast.

Some people might say— but, pshaw ! it's a mere coincidence.

McKellar is an honorable man.

The directory says so anyway, and Harry Irwin couldn't tell a lie any more than George Washington.

I went to the Crown Lands Department the other day to see Scott.

"Can I have an interview with the Commissioner to-day?" I queried, noticing a number of lumber merchants loafing about.

"I'll *ax*," was the secretary's cutting response.

He presently returned, saying that Mr. Scott would see me directly.

"Ah how do Scott? Hope I see you sir," I said blandly as I entered the apartment where the illustrious Commissioner was busily engaged in laying out fresh timber berths in the unsurveyed sections of the Province.

"Excuse me," said he, "but really I don't think I have the honor—"

"Oh," I said, "well that's soon remedied. My name is Briggs. I'm a member of the Reform press. I come to elicit some information respecting the policy of the Ministry."

"Why didn't you go to Mackenzie? he knows all about the policy and is in the Isolated Risk Insurance Company," said Scott with a cynical smile.

"What I particularly came to enquire about," said I, "was the timber policy."

"Oh," replied he "that's very simple and easily explained. *Simplex munditiis*, as Horace observes. Sell off all the timber as quick as possible, and realize what we can on it. Make hay while the sun shines. Hew, hack and slash. Strip the country and fill the treasury."

"But," I ventured to say, "isn't this something like killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. If you keep on this way the next Commissioner won't have any timber limits to sell."

"Very well, my dear sir, that's his look out, not mine. They'll last my time. *Après moi le delug*. Anyhow, the next man will be some infernal Tory."

"But, excuse me if I am under a misapprehension I thought you yourself were—a Liberal Conservative, so to speak," said I.

"Sir," he replied, with some asperity, "my sentiments are entirely in accord with those of my colleagues. There are no Tories in this Government."

"That probably accounts for its being so *no-tori-ous* I piquantly responded.

He smiled very faintly and said, "A man of your

intellect cannot fail to perceive the danger of leaving these magnificent resources a prey to the devastations of the fire-fiend any longer than absolutely necessary. How do we know that the nation's wealth will not any day be swept away in one dread holocaust of flame."

"True," I replied. "I wonder you don't insure the forests in the Isolated Risk."

"I never once thought of that," said Scott with animation. "Why it's only the other day that Mac was round asking if we hadn't anything to insure. I'll mention it to him next time I see him. Thank you for the idea."

I am always furnishing ideas to this Government, but somehow they never show any practical appreciation of them.

Here the conversation terminated, as several influential lumber-men were anxiously awaiting an interview.

As I sauntered along Yonge street I saw an overcoat hanging outside a store—just the thing I stood in need of for the winter.

I entered and accosted the proprietor, whose name I ascertained from the sign was O'Callaghan.

"Mr. O'Callaghan," said I.

"Yis, sir," said he in a rich Milesian brogue.

"You belong I fancy to the Celtic race, that noble stock which has given to the world so many eminent names in the arenas of war, literature, science, oratory

and statemanship. You are a countryman of O'Connell, Sarsfield, Moore, Grattan, Burke, Blake, and Scott, of Ottawa—are you not."

"Faix sur, ye may well say that ; an' its proud I am of that same, bar.in' the two dirty spalpeens ye mentioned along wid the paythriots and haroes av ould," he answered.

"Yes, 'twas a mere over-sight I assure you. Noble-hearted son of beateous Erin, what do you ask for that overcoat."

"Tin dollars, an' chape at the money."

"I'll take it," said I, suiting the action to the word and walking away.

"Hold on there you omadhaun, where's ye'r money?" he hastily observed.

"Money! oh, I understood you to say you belonged to the Celtic race. I want you to sell this on tick."

It didn't take. The Irish are fast losing that genial appreciation of delicate humor which formerly characterized them and acquiring the sordid mercenary propensities of the cold-hearted Saxon.

"Divil a man av ye takes that coat widout the cash," he exclaimed, as I laid down the garment and slowly resumed my walk.

He muttered something about my being a "perfect Froude," probably an illusion to the eminent English

historian, who is not in favour with the Irish.

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D. B.

Graduate of Coboconk University.

Bummer's Roost,

Toronto, Nov. 28.



LETTER V.

Pirates of the Pen—Jimuel Plagiarized—He seeks Legal Redress—
Interview with Blake—How a Chancery Office is Run.

THOUGH the prefix "miss" is usually employed to denote a state of single blessedness, yet misfortunes never come singly.

"When sorrows come," observes the talented W. Shakespeare, "they come, not single spies, but in battalions." And William was right. In fact, as a writer he is considered unequalled.

In addition to being the victim of misrepresentation at the hands of my political opponents, and a sufferer from misplaced confidence in professed friends and unsympathetic creditors, my overwrought sensibilities have been outraged afresh by the reprehensible conduct of emulous plagiarists and unscrupulous pirates of the *Blatherer*.

Envious of the unprecedented success of the *Irradiator*, which owing to my able and graphic lucubrations, has become a *vade mecum*, whatever that means, in every household in the land, numerous of these individuals have been attempting feeble imitations of my unrivalled and pellucid contributions to your columns.

Sic vos non vobis, &c. Even Virgil suffered from the plagiarism of base pretenders.

I saw a whole column of my writing in the Nipissing *Blatherer* the other day, stolen without a word of acknowledgment.

"This thing must be stopped" said I resolutely.

I was considering how to oppose the piratical *Blatherer* when my eye fell upon the following conspicuous advertisement in the paper :—

"BLAKE, KERR & BOYD,

BARRISTERS, &C.,

NO. 5 MASONIC HALL, TORONTO.

N. B.—Special facilities for obtaining injunctions in the Court of Chancery."

"The very thing" I triumphantly exclaimed. "I'll fix the loathsome incendiary of the *Blatherer* now. I'll injunct him."

I started off at once to the Masonic Hall, and was speedily ushered into the presence of the ex-Premier.

"Well Sir, said he abruptly, "your business?"

I told him my case, and asked if the law would allow the noblest sentiments of the human bosom to be ruthlessly lacerated, the pride of paternity, as it were, outraged by Bohemians in human form?"

"My dear Sir," said he, "rest assured that there is no doubt of your case in *our* hands. We have done away with the doubt and suspense that formerly characterized proceeding in Chancery, and reduced matters to a certainty."

"Yes," I replied. "I notice you advertise special

facilities for obtaining injunctions, and that is why I came here. But in what do they consist?"

"I am surprised that a man of your intelligence should put the question," said Blake. "You must surely have heard of my brother's appointment to the bench."

"Oh, of course, I forgot that. Why, you own a judge all to yourselves, like Jim Fisk used to. Big thing for the the firm. It was a good idea to shunt Mowat to make a round hole for Sammy to fit into. No danger of his proving too square for it! Oh, he'll injunct every time, you bet!

"But I guess you'll feel kind of queer calling Sammy 'my lud,' and treating him with the deference due the bench, and so forth when only a few weeks since he was your clerk as it were. Shouldn't wonder if you'd forget the change some of these days and try to boss him."

"Mr. Briggs," responded Blake with austerity. "I must deprecate these irrelevancies and undue liberties with private affairs. Besides, I am extremely busy and have no time to converse except on strictly professional matters."

I wasn't going to be put down by his consequential airs, so I replied, "How about that statement that on your return from England, Brown told you that you had to swallow Mowat, when you declined on the ground that he might disagree with you, but afterwards

thought better of it and acquiesced, saying you had killed the cuss off this time sure."

"It's a dam--aging Tory lie," replied Blake, with a calmness that to my sensitive appreciation, was suspicious. "It's a positive absurdity. They might as well say that the reason I decline office is because Brown won't let me alone, and I can't brook his dictation. The Inc--"

"Yes, that's the name for him. He's nothing else."

"You misapprehend me. The incredible amount of business I was about to observe, which the new firm will have, renders it impossible for me to re-enter public life. My partners are very young men and know that two and two make four, but Sammy and I have always made it five."

"But you found the Incubus rather depressing, I guess."

"Enough of that, sir," said Blake. "Let us now revert to business. Do you wish us to proceed in your affair?"

"Certainly, I'll entrust my case with you. Go right ahead."

"With pleasure, Mr. Briggs—but, ahem--merely as a little matter of form, you know--twenty dollars as retainer."

"What?"

"Twenty dollars I said, as retainer. The firm is numerous, and it is but four dollars apiece."

"Oh but I thought the other fellow would be stuck for the costs,"—undoubtedly—but still as I previously remarked we always take a retaining fee, as a matter of form you know," said I.

"We dont do business in any such manner" said the great reformer with some asperity.

"If you like to retain us we we'll file a bill for you, otherwise, good morning."

"Good morning, magnanimous Luther of the New Dominion and chancery regenerator," I exclaimed, "I'll bring the cost around to morrow."

"Oh never shall the Sun that morrow see"—Shakespeare again.

I ran against Laidlaw as I left Blake's, and he asked me if I could extend my influence in aid of the Credit Valley Railroad bonus.

I cordially invited him to ask me to take a drink which he of course did, and then related the details of the Scheme.

"Let me see," said I, the Credit Valley line must run North."

"No, said he, " West."

"I was about sure it ran north."

"Why so?"

"Because it ought in the nature of things to bring up *Owin Sound*."

He smiled and then we smiled again together.

Count upon you to advocate this great work' said Laidlaw.

"Shall do so with pleasure," said I, Credit Valley must indeed be a delightful spot, an oasis to speak in the arid waste of life's wilderness—Credit Valley a h there is music to my ear in the name, compared to which the vaunted glories of the vale of *Cashmere*, fade into prosaic [insipidity—Why it must be a veritable vale Tempe.

This some what far fetched classic humorism doubtless requires some elaboration to render it intelligible to the uneducated understanding.

Tempe nearly assimilated to *tempus* which is Latin for "time" which is in its commercial signification *Credit*—see?

"Yes yes" said Laidlaw," Credit Valley once opened to the trade of the commercial emporium the business of the city will vastly increase. Capital find an outlet—our merchants have additional markets for their goods—in short, wealth will flow in upon us."

"Line," Said I, "all we want is Credit."

In pursuance of an arrangement I effected with him I have been for the last few days like an artist, hard at work on the canvass.

It's an agreeable occupation while it lasts but will be all over in a day or two, for the vote will be taken on Friday.

Then, alas! Credit *Vale*; classic humorism.

—JIMUEL BRIGGS, D. B.,

Graduate of Coboconk University

Toronto, Dec. 12th.

LETTER VI.

A deputation from Coboconk—They interview McKellar, about the Model Farm—Briggs appointed a special Commissioner to Examine the Sites around Coboconk.

Editor Coboconk Irradiator:

“THERE is no cloud but has its silver lining,” says the adage, and I am happy to state that the clouds which have so long obscured my genius have at last proved to be well electro-plated at any rate.

Last week, as I pursued along King street the even tenor of my way—a fact which, as you will perceive, contradicts those accusations of *base* motives sometimes brought against me—I was surprised to meet several familiar faces, which reminded me of boyhood’s sylvan scenes in my native village.

Half a dozen of the inhabitants of Coboconk and vicinity greeted my gaze.

My first impulse was to bid them welcome on behalf of the great metropolis in which I proudly claim citizenship, and introduce them to the nearest aldermanic candidate, thereby saving the expense of the customary social observances.

On second thoughts, however, I determined to pass them unrecognized on noticing amongst them Mr. Peerzlinger, a Teutonic tavern keeper who

is the victim of a remarkable hallucination to the effect that I owe him a trifling account of nine dollars.

I tried to keep out of the way. I didn't want to awaken unpleasant reminiscences and needlessly lacerate his feelings.

But in vain. Mr. Blathers, rising Grit orator of the village, presently exclaimed, "Hello, Briggs, old fellow is that you? Shake.!"

I was just about to *shake* the whole crowd if he hadn't stopped me.

"Vell, Priggsey, how you vas anyhow? You don't got dat leetle nine tollars yet, heh?" ejaculated Mr. Peerzlinger.

"Not just at present," I replied "Unfortunately, I have just deposited a large amount with my banker, but I'll call round to your hotel and settle before you leave town."

The able bodied larger dispenser muttered something about "ausgespeilt," and relapsed into moody silence.

I learned that the party had come as a delegation to interview the Government and secure the Agricultural College and Model Farm for Coboconk, if possible.

"Ah!" said I, "I can, perhaps, be of some service to you. I know McKellar intimately. I will, if you like, introduce you, and add my testimony to the salubrity of the location, the richness of the soil, the beauty of the scenery, the size of the saw-logs, bull-frogs, cat,

fish, and other produce which pre-eminently fit it to become the seat of bucolic advancement."

"'Taint no sech a thing !" indignantly exclaimed an honest old agriculturist. "There aint no healthier place in the Province. There's no blue colic nor any other kind of colic around. So don't you have no wrong ideas about that."

"Our venerable friend," said Mr. Blathers, "appears to misapprehend the phrase. Bucolic signifies appertaining to agricultural pursuits, and although I can truly say with the poet, "*non ego sum pastos non ego sum incola montis*, nevertheless I yield to none in the estimation in which I hold the honest toilers—the bone and sinew, so to speak, of our land, were it not for whom, the wilderness—the wilderness—as I was about to remark, would blossom as the rose."

"Yet, a pile you care about the farmers, you do," observed the veteran, "all you want is to get into 'the House, and draw your little six dollars a day."

"Well, gentlemen," said I, "suppose we proceed on our mission."

"Yet," put in another of the delegation, "Let's go and see Blake."

"No," said I, "Blake has no influence with the Ministry. Besides, agriculture is not in his line—he is a gentleman of *haughty-culture* (horticulture). Mc Kellar's the man.

Notwithstanding the Commissioner's previous command to keep away from his department, I knew tha

he dare not snub me in my new character as member of a deputation.

"Well, gentlemen," said he, "as we filed slowly into the apartment, and the rustics gazed with awe upon the great representative of agricultural interests, "What can I do for you?"

"We are here, your highness," I replied, "in order to approach one who guides the helm of the ship of state."

McKellar here made a deprecatory gesture, as if he considered that I was stretching things a little too far.

"I repeat, sir, we approach one who guides the helm of the Ship of State—for are you not the only *tiller* in the Government? (Laughter)—to request that he claims of Coboconk as a location for the Model Farm and Agricultural College may be taken into consideration."

"What," replied Mr. McKellar, "another place applying for that institution? We have examined about fifty sites already. What special advantages does Coboconk possess?"

"Its productive qualities are unrivalled," said Mr. Blathers. "The fertility of the soil something surprising. When beauteous spring ethereal mildness hails—no, *rains* I meant to say—and verdure decks the plain—and the lowing herds wind slowly o'er the ea—the ploughman wields his sickle, and the turnips, whose luscious fragrance pervades the atmosphere

bow beneath his sturdy stroke, And in the mellow summer time the gladsome sound of harrow, as it denudes the ripened hog of its fleecy covering—”

“That would indeed be a *harrowing* spectacle, said McKellar. “Is that all you know about farming?”

“But really, Mr. McKellar,” said I, “the advantages of Coboconk cannot be overlooked. An immense quantity of produce is raised there—comprising lumber, corn rye, potatoes, carrots, beets——”

“Yaw, I dink so too,” interrupted the accursed Dutchman. “Blenty of beats boud dare, you know how dat was yourself. Priggsey don’t it?”

“Well,” said McKellar, “we can do nothing until the location has been visited by a Special Commission which I will proceed at once to appoint. Mr. Blathers, a word in private with you, if you please.”

The remainder of the deputation withdrew, but I took an early opportunity of returning to the Department, where Blathers was in earnest conversation with McKellar.

They broke off abruptly at my approach, but I heard Blathers say, “That’s too much. I wouldn’t mind going four hundred, for I want to get the farm off my hands.”

I at once inferred that they were fixing up a little private business in connection with the matter.

“Oh, Briggs,” said McKellar, “I’ve put you down as

a member of this special commission, which will square up that little matter between us—mum's the word, of course, as so anything transpiring here. Four dollars a day and expenses."

"Noble, generous man," I exclaimed, "how can I ever repay you?"

"Don't thank me, I have only done my duty," he replied, magnanimously.

"Who will be my colleagues?" I enquired, with some solicitude, "I have known some Grits whose personal habits were such as greatly to detract from the satisfaction of co-operation with them. I was on Rob. Wilkes' committee last election, and found it fearfully uninteresting for a long time until I accidentally discovered the corner where the bottle was secreted."

"I am just drawing up the list," said he, "and shall be glad of your assistance."

"With pleasure, my liege. Suppose you put down Sandy Henderson. He is eminently qualified by his experience on the Board of Works, as the streets of Toronto attest. His knowledge of the value agricultural paddocks attached to the residences of aldermen is also a point in his favour."

"Tery good. Next."

"he agricultural man of the *Globe*."

"Qualifications?"

"None that I know of. But then every body isn't surely expected to have qualifications for their appointments. Put him down on general principles."

"All right."

"Not bad. Who next?"

"Prof. McLennan, McClellan or McLellan, can't vouch for the orthography. Defeated at West Toronto election. Lots of experience in sowing wild oats. Besides it sounds well to have a professor on the list anyhow."

"Down he goes. Any one else?"

"Ald. Hallam. Good judge of hides. He will represent the sheep interest, which must not be overlooked."

"Then that's enough. You proceed forthwith to Coboconk. And now, Briggs, you understand you are not to recommend any of these fellow's farms until they fix things. Render an open verdict as it were. In particular, point out the defects of that man Blathers' lot. He doesn't seem disposed to do the customary thing."

We started on the following day up the Nippissing gully provided with pickaxes, flasks, shovels, bottles, snow ploughs, sugar, lemons, and all the necessary apparatus for such an expedition.

For the past few days we have been making explorations. The snow is only about ten feet deep in this section, which doesn't much retard operations.

The farmer's are very hospitable. One of them yesterday invited me to borrow five dollars of him. He don't want to sell his farm, but then of course if the Government particularly wished it he might sacrifice it in the interest of science at \$1000 an acre.

Another blandly whispered that if the report was favourable he had a nice two year old colt he wouldn't mind making a present of to me.

The trouble is that we are so hampered by instructions from headquarters we hardly know how to act. It's very trying position, but, if these honest old farmers will keep crowding money and things on a man it's not in human nature to refuse. Is it?

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D. B.,

Graduate of Coboconk University.

Coboconk, Jan. 2nd.



LETTER VII.

The Grit Symposium—Importunate Beats—The Chiefs in Council—Unappreciated Humor—Economy in Viands—Fiery Sherry and Cheap Champagne—No Spoons—Effects of Grit Oratory and bad Wine—Home in a Wheelbarrow.

Editor Coboconk Irradiator :—

The eventful day has at length come and gone—The 8th of January, characterized as it was by the opening of the session and the great Reform symposium—which is Greek for “Guzzle”—should be a red-letter day in the calendar, so which end I forward my letter, which I hope will be *read*.

I was’nt so much interested in the opening of the House. It was a *dry* affair. The other was much the reverse.

Punctually on the stroke of six I arrived at the Music Hall, which was already besieged by an impatient crowd of hungry looking beats, anxious to secure free tickets.

They crowded into the hall, tried to pass the door-keeper, and waylaid the leaders of the party as they entered.

“Mr. Brown,” said one importunate cuss—“havn’t you got a spare ticket about you? I’m a good Reformer. I take the *Globe*, and gave you a ten-dollar

advertisement only yesterday."

"Na, na, mon. Gin ye're sich a gude Reformer, ye should support the pairty by payin for yer ticket. We've been pit to ower muckle expense sendin free tickets tae 'Tories and men o' doubtfu' poscetion to gie ony awa' to Reformers."

"I shan't fool away three dollars—no, nor one dollar—in any such way, Mr. Brown," he replied sulkily. "The principle of a money payment for the concession of bibulistical rights has ever been repugnant to the feelings of the Canadian people." And he left

Presently Mackenzie, McKellar and McMurchie drove up in a sleigh. I was rather surprised at this unusual extravagance, such as might be expected of a corrupt Tory Ministry, but is in direct contrast to Grit principles of economy.

I subsequently, learned, however, that they had walked to the corner of King Street, and that their drive of a hundred yards or so, for the sake of appearances, only cost them a quarter.

"Hello, Mac," I said, as they passed into the cloak room.

Half a dozen or more answered my salutation.

"Ah, Briggs," said McKellar, "glad to see you—Back from Coboconk?"

"Yes, took a run down for a few days. My salary runs on the same, of course."

"Why certainly. You were right to come. We want to make as strong a show as possible to night."

By this time the banquet hall was filling fast. So were some of the banqueters who had attacked the decanters in advance.

I obtained a good seat near the platform, so that I could share the conversation of the party chiefs and enliven them with some of my elaborately prepared impromptu witicisms.

A horrible thought flashed over me—which makes me shudder as I recall it even now—*Could it be possible that this table had been set apart for the temperance section of the party?*

A cold perspiration bathed my brow, and the life current congealed in my veins at the idea.

But I was speedily re-assured. A little reflection convinced me that my fears were groundless.

"Pshaw," said I, "it cannot be; you might count all the temperance men in this crowd on your fingers.

'Tis a mere oversight.

And so it proved for a waiter presently appeared and distributed the necessary fluids in obedience to the clamorous outcries of my neighbours—and the revelry proceeded, though the formality of taking the chair had not yet been gone through.

Pretty soon, however, the stalwart form of George Brown, followed by a dozen or more of the part

leaders, appeared on the platform, whereat the audience did highly jubilate.

No sooner had they assumed their seats, than the *graceless* assemblage, without waiting for grace, assaulted the edibles, and they had previously the strong and fiery compound termed by the credulous "sherry."

"Wherefore graceth not Senator McMaster our banquet with his august presence?" enquired McKellar.

"How would his presence be august and this January?" said John McKeown, of Hamilton.

Nobody even smiled except Rymal. McKellar proceeded to explain that he didn't mean it in that sense.

The Scotch Grits didn't see a joke very readily, but I thought I'd try them.

"You asked," said I, "why McMaster didn't attend the banquet. I suppose because he couldn't his *bank'quit*. How's that."

An owl-like aspect of unruffled serenity pervaded the assemblage. They didn't take.

"That was not the reason," said Brown. "He couldna be here on account of sickness. He tauld me that he would be wi' us in speerit though."

"In that case," said I, determined to make a last desperate attempt, "this banquet resembles that of Macbeth."

"Why so?"

"Because it is attended by a *ghost of banquo* (banker)?"

Not a solitary snicker. Not the faintest indication of a smile.

Nothing but the ponderous sledge-hammer jokes of Joe. Rymal, strongly spiced with profanity, would fetch a Grit crowd.

Gazing around the hall I noticed numerous mottoes on the walls—such as "Economy in every Department of the Public Service."

The sparsity of the dishes on the board denoted the thoughtfulness with which this maxim was carried out in the banquet department of the public service.

Oyster soup was served, after most of the revellers had in their haste assimilated the more substantial viands.

It was constructed on economical principles. Plenty of soup but very little oyster. There was an average intermission of ten minutes between each bivalve.

There was moreover a scarcity of spoons, but then as Peter Gow sagely observed, "a man don't want a spoon all to himself."

"Lend me your spoon for a minute," said a voracious banqueter, whose soup was fast cooling, to a more favoured individual, who responded by a haughty stare of surprise.

"I hate to see a man act hoggish," was the rebuke

delicately administered to the unsociable cuss.

Meanwhile the waiters were dispensing champagne to the guests in tumblers.

A remarkable superstition obtained among our ancestors, for the prevalence of what it is difficult to account, to the effect that this beverage is manufactured in France from the juice of the grape.

I should hardly have thought it possible that so absurd a belief should continue in this enlightened age; but from the conversation of my neighbors I gathered that it is not wholly extinct, even in this boasted nineteenth century.

I merely mention this to show how obsolete and exploded traditions linger in the rural districts, even with the plainest evidence to the contrary.

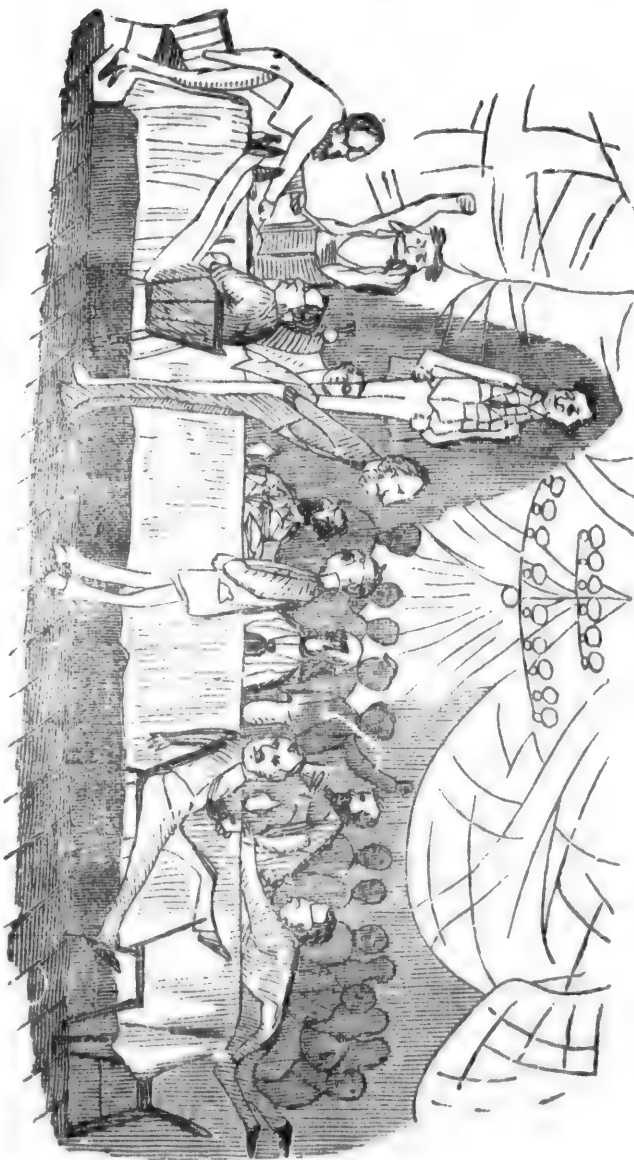
It was a mistake to provide tumblers instead of wine glasses. A man speedily looses his reckoning and can't calculate to a nicety how much he can take without disturbing his equilibrium.

Not that such considerations ever influence me. I was bound to secure the value of the three dollars I don't pay, whether I succumbed or not.

I did succumb. I have but a faint recollection of the toasts and speeches, like the glimmering consciousness of a state of pre-existence in another world which sometimes flashes across our thoughts.

I have certain vague and indistinct recollections of

REFORM BANQUET AT THE MUSIC HALL.



the chairman making numerous speeches, of seeing "as through a glass darkly," his arms waving wildly in the air, and the scared look on Mowat's countenance as he hastily drew back his head to avoid an accidental blow.

Dim and misty memories, as of boyhood's dreams come o'er me of toasts drunk with all the honours, and shouting, excited individuals in the same condition, of decanters that waltzed wildly up and down the board, of lights which danced and whirled in a thousand devious directions, of a very unsteady platform, which rose and fell like a storm-tossed bark, of tables and chairs that acted in a similar manner as if under the manipulation of a spiritual medium.

Grit oratory and cheap champagne were too many for me—Gradually the sights and sounds faded from my consciousness.

Christie proposed, Blake pleaded, Mackenzie ranted and Rymal buffooned, but I heard them not.

Mowat's eloquence didn't affect me.—Imitation *Moet* and Chandon did.—All was a blank.

How long I continued in this state I know not. I have a hazy undefined remembrance of somebody asking my address, of being dragged over and past certain reeling and prostrate forms, of a jolting motion over the sidewalks and of somehow gaining my own room.

The handcart and wheelbarrow department did

their work nobly. The foresight of the promoters of the banquet in providing such a necessary adjunct, cannot be too highly praised. *Palman qui meruit ferat.*

I woke to-day with a racking headache and raging thirst, but a matutinal cocktail set me comparatively right.

I guess I had the worth of my ticket anyhow.

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D. B.,
Graduate of Coboconk University.
Toronto, Jan. 10th, 1873.



POLITICAL EXPERIENCES

LETTER VIII.

Low Remuneration of Journalism—Briggs Applies for a Position on the "Globe"—Interviews Brown—Sir John's Machination—Brown's Views on the Situations—Rymal, Blake and McMaster—The Ottawa Leadership—The Local House—Briggs' Experience in Short-Hand Reporting—His Compulsory Resignation.

Editors Cobocenk Irradiator :

I don't think you've hardly done the square thing by me, considering that my able letters—revealing as they have done the secret springs of action which influence our politicians, and letting your readers behind the scenes of the Ministerial theatre—have secured for your unrivalled journal a hitherto unprecedented circulation.

Some time since I intimated that a raise of salary would not be unacceptable, considering the high price of the necessities of life, and the fact that I have now been so long in Toronto that the boarding-house keepers have got to know me and heartlessly demand cash in advance.

I made the suggestion in private note, so that you could have made the advance spontaneously and entirely unsolicited, which would have elicited a touching and graceful tribute from my pen to your innate

generosity and goodness of heart, that even the exigencies of the editorial functions could not wholly obliterate.

This of itself would have been worth double the trifling additional remuneration I sought.

But what did you reply? With an unfeeling levity totally out of place in dealing with so serious a subject you observed, making a feeble attempt at jocosity, worthy the intellect even of a Rymal, that my investigation on the Model Farm commission should have taught me that they didn't *raise celery* (salary) in those parts.

Can you blame me, if, in a state of temporary indignation at such trifling, I resolved to contribute no more of my choice and elevating lucubrations to your columns, but to transfer my services to some city journal?

I had for some time noticed an advertisement in the *Globe* for a short-hand reporter and determined, if possible, to secure the vacant position.

I accordingly took the first opportunity of waiting on the Hon. George, and enquiring if there was any show for me in that capacity.

"Aweel, aweel, mon that depends," said he cautiously, "ye ken we've had an awfu' trouble about reporters. We tak on first ane and syne anither, but they winna stay—an' it's no difficult to perceive the inseedious hand o' Sir John A Macdonald in the matter."

"The Tories have sworn to crush the *Globe* out of existence, an' wi' the secret sairvice fun' an' the ither resources o' a corrupt government it's easy to offer the chieils' mair inducements than a private indivieedual can, an' seduce them awa."

I was glad to hear this, and resolved if I should be so fortunate as to be engaged, to allow myself to be seduced by Sir John's agents.

"In order tae provide against these difficulties an, circumvent Tory machinations," he went on to say "we make all our 'employees' sign an engagement for three years, sae that gin they leave us they'll be criminally liable."

"What are your terms, Mr. Brown?" I enquired, feeling rather disconcerted at the last piece of information.

"Well, that wad depend on your abeelities entirely. Ye're a guid short-hand reporter I suppose?"

"Oh yes, just as short as you please," I replied pleased to think that he was in favor of conciseness and brevity in reporting.

"Na mon, ye misunderstan' me—are ye a funny grapher?"

"Funny ! you can just gamble on it—see here !" And I pulled out several *Irradiators* and drew his attention to some of my most poignant humourisms.

"Tak awa they trash," he said, pitching them to

the other end of the room. "Hae ye no a grain of sense about ye? I mean can you report verbatim."

"Oh that's it—Why certainly," said I.

"Well, then," said Brown, "gie ye'll sign a three years' agreement for six dollars a week the first year, seven the next, an' eight the last we'll tak' ye on."

I suggested that the figure was rather slim.

"Tut, tut, mon," said he, "its varra guid. I can get any number o' men for that. I hae editors that are weel content wi' eight dollars. Acquisitiveness young man is the crying voice of the age."

Seeing that this was the best I could do, I signed the contract, and asked when I should commence.

"Ye had better gang till the Hoose this afternoon," said Brown, "and in the meantime, I wad like to hae a confidential conversation wi' ye, for I want ye to understand the poseetion of affairs in the party."

"I may aiblins alloo ye to write an editorial now an again in addition to your reportorial duties."

"You are too good, Mr. Brown," I murmured in a voice choked with emotion and tobacco-juice, which I didn't care to discharge on the floor of his sanctum.

"Ye were at the banquet, were ye?" enquired Brown.

"Yes, sir," said I.

"And what's ye're opinion of it?"

"A most enthusiastic and overwhelming success—a gathering of which the party may well be proud

a galaxy of the brightest lights of Reform, including as it did the brilliant names of Brown, Lake, Mackenzie McKellar, Rymal—

A spasm of mingled anguish and rage corrugated his lofty brow at the mention of the latter name.

‘Rymal did ye say?—Oh, the villain! Why he had the insouciance to defy Me—to make Me the butt o’ his clumsy buffoonery—an, maist o’ the graceless drunken chieftains laughed at his low wit too. But I’m no to be treated in the way, as he’ll find out.’

‘Yes, but upon the whole it was a brilliant affair.’

‘Aye, and an unco expensive one into the bargain; the bills that have been coming in are fairly awful, and they charged for that vile trash they ca’ed ‘champagne,’ as if it was a first-class article too.

‘And what do ye think. That birkie Wilkes, wha I elected for Centre Toronto, winna pay a cent of his share. We pit him doon fifty dollars, but he repudiates a’thegither. He says he’s a temperance man and canna’ conscientiously pay for the wine, whilk is muckle the largest item.

‘I tauld him that nae politician had ony business tae fash about conscience, and gin I had been actuated by sic consideration, I could never hae attained my present proud poseition.’

“I guess the trouble with Wilkes is that he wasn’t asked to speak,” I replied

“I doobt of it, mon but we can’t allow

every sucking politician to blether awa. Losh, but he wad hae been guid for two hours at the least, and I'd sooner pay the fifty dollars oot o' my ain purse than hae given him the ehance.'

'By the way, sir, who is to be leader at Ottawa?' I enquired.

'Oh, that'll be just as satisfactorily arranged as in Ontario. I'm bound to hae my will here, since to judge from the doings of the Ontario Hoose in the Goodhue case, I may nae hae it after I'm deid.

'I gaed till the Bench for a leader for the Pairty in the Local Hoose, and I'll gang—well, I was about to mention a locality which is unmentionable amang the unco guid—for a mon to suit me in the commons.

'Mackenzie is a' richt the noo, an' does ilka thing I tell him, but then it's hard to ken wha to place dependence on, and I'll no trust in any ane man.'

'Quite right, Sir. Don't run any *isolated risks*,' I responded.

'One thing is sure,' said he. 'I'll no put up with the independence o' yon mon Blake. He aspires to the leadership, but I'll worry him till he breaks down as he did before.'

This closed the conversation, and I went to the Hoose and proudly took my seat in the gallery as the representative of the great *Globe* itself.'

The speakers don't show much consideration for

reporters. Before you have finished taking down the first sentence they are ever so far ahead of you.

I had considerable difficulty therefore in obtaining a correct report of their speeches ; but being familiar with the questions of the day, I supplied any defects arising from my not hearing what they did say, by recording what they ought to have said.

My fellow Bohemians tell me I am fortunate hitherto. I haven't had to report Tom Ferguson.

After having strained myself, in hanging over the verge of the gallery to catch Crook's indistinct mumbling, and jotted down what I could catch of Rykert's rhapsodies, and translated Robinson's *false* *setto* squeak and Prince's shallow silliness into intelligible English, and carefully noted Lauder's numerous interruptions, the long-threatened oration has no terrors for me. I heard Wood on the timber question last night.

People seemed surprised to hear him attacking the Government. I wasn't.

When a man sells himself he has a right to expect C. O. D.

Wood is only bought as yet, not paid for, and can't be expected to complete his part of the contract before the Government do theirs.

That arbitration appointment to England will put him all right.

Scott's policy is to sell the timber off before it gets burned or stolen.

The trouble with Scott is, he is as badly scared of fire as an average revival convert.

He won't let his clerks work in the office night's for fear of fire. He dismissed one of them the other day because his nose looked fiery, and how he ever mustered courage to take out a writ of *Fieri Facias* in his professional capacity, I can't imagine.

He is a monomaniac on the subject, and hence his timber policy.

I wasn't long on the *Globe* staff. This morning Brown sent for me.

"Briggs," said he, in a voice of thunder, "Ye maun be a natural-born idiot. Maister McKellar spoke over half an hour yesterday, and ye hae only given him two or three sentences."

"I could not help it," said I. "You see he would keep right on with his speech before I had got the first of it down. That wasn't my fault, was it?"

"Get oot o' this office. Get oot wi ye, ye feckless, shiftless, loon," roared Brown in a rage. "I discharge ye!"

"Hold up, my venerable friend, I have a three years' agreement!" I gently remarked.

"That for your three years' agreement!" said he tearing the document into shreds, and raising his foot ominously.

I saw that he was not susceptible to arugment, and resigned. I mean that as he *wasn't* resigned, *I did*.

Seems to me, though, that these three years' contracts ought to work both ways.

I guess I shall stick to the *Irradiator* awhile yet. If the pay isn't quite so good on the country^e press, the editors aint so exacting.

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D.B.,

Graduate of Coboconk University.

Toronto, Jan. 16th, 1873.



LETTER IX.

Pa ntary Trip to Brantford—The Blind Asylum—Vis it to the
Courier Office.

Editor Coboconk Irradiator:—

THE eternal fitness of things was never more appropriately illustrated than by the visit of the Ministry to the Blind Institute at Brantford last week.

They and their followers have been going it blind so long that they doubtless feel quite in their element on this occasion.

I was all the more pleased at the opportunity so generously tendered by McKellar to accompany this excursion in my capacity as a member of the press, on account of the stringency of the railroad regulations shutting down on free passes.

I always enjoy travelling so much better when it doesn't cost anything.

When presenting your free pass to the conductor you feel yourself immeasurably above the wretch so devoid of influence as to be under the necessity of buying a ticket, whom you regard with a mingled air of complacent pity and lofty scorn.

But, alas, those days now belong to history. The

levelling spirit of democracy is gradually destroying every vestige of respect for time-honoured institutions, and the press shares in the general overthrow.

Pretty soon a Bohemian won't have any more privileges than the rest of society.

Little worthy of special notice occurred during the trip. McKellar grumbled considerably at having to pay a newsboy five cents for a *Globe*. He said it was a swindle and a fraud on the public.

Rykert said it ill became the honourable Commissioner of Agriculture to talk of swindles when the country in vain asked for an explanation of Elgin Association frauds.

Wood was about replying, when Ferguson blandly suggested that he had better "Speak Now."

He thereupon drew the attention of the conductor to the absence of spittoons on the cars.

Meanwhile Lauder had collected a party at the other end of the car to whom he was expatiating on the Proton outrage.

Fortunately the noise of the cars when in motion prevented my hearing any further conversation of this nature. We arrived in due time at Brantford, and after being received by the Corporation and invested with the freedom of the city drove to the Institute.

Dr. Wiggins, the Principal, showed us round and put some of the pupils through an examination. It is

really wonderful how they learn.

I shouldn't wonder if some of these afflicted ones after a while get to know as much about finaucering as Crooks, and equal Hodgins in point of legal erudition.

After McKellar had impressed upon the Principal the necessity of inculcating sound political doctrines, so that the inmates would vote right, we left for the town.

I dropped into the *Courier* office and introduced myself to Lemon.

He has a nice office. He showed me his Wharfedale presses and new type and other accessories, and asked me what I thought of it.

"Well, you have things about O. K., I replied, "Nice office—very neat and so forth—everything about complete. But there is one thing needed yet?"

"Yes ! and what is that ?"

"You want a place for the bailiff to sleep."

"Bailiff ! what bailiff ?"

"You a veteran journalist and ask such an absurd question ! You surprise me. No printing office ought to be without accommodations for the bailiff. You see if you can make him comfortable, that obviates the necessity for his removing your presses and type, before you raise the money. It's a great advantage."

"Sir," he said, apparently rather offended at my suggestion which was not at all intended to be personal, "I have no necessity to adopt such devices"

You had better offer your advice to the loathsome pirate of the *News* or the blathering imbecile who inflicts the *Expositor* on a long suffering community.

"Their scurrilous and obscene sheets are just about to terminate a sickly and pestiferous career and they may thank you for such a hint."

I was sorry to have unintentionally offended him, so to change the subject I asked him to interview Fleming who keeps the Brant House.*

He consented, and after having solved the problem of existence together, I was about departing when the bar-keeper observed, "Ten cents if you please."

"That's all right," said I.

"Yes, all right as soon as you come down."

"There's a mistake somewhere ; I'm a privileged individual, I can walk into any bar-room I please, and get anything I want."

"You can, eh ? Who are you, anyway ?"

"I had the freedom of the town conferred on me this morning by the Corporation," said I, proudly.

"I don't know nothin' about that ; you'd better pay for them drinks pretty sudden."

I paid him and got on board the homeward-bound train.

The freedom of the town of Brantford don't amount to much. Why continue these ancient mediæval ceremonies, which have thus lost their pristine signifi-

* I have since learned that Fleming don't keep the Brant House. I never was in Brantford in my life, so the public must excuse these little discrepancies. It is always a great advantage to a reporter to be present at affairs which he undertakes to describe.

cance, and become a delusive mockery ?'

The House has been pretty lively during the last week.

On Friday they went into Committee on Ways and Means, and got to slangwhanging each other on the "Speak Now," question.

A *Globe* man in the gallery suggested that the debate wasn't in order under this head.

I said it was the House being in Committee on Ways and Means, Cameron had a perfect right to accuse Wood of *mean ways*.

I have attended numerous municipal councils, and similar bodies in my time, but even the Toronto aldermen can't hold a candle to the Ontario Legislature for vituperation.

So many hard names are bestowed that the only way in which a man can retain least respect for the House is by supposing them to be liars of the first magnitude. If they *do* tell the truth, they must necessarily be destitute of all other virtues.

I only gained one new idea by that "Speak Now," discussion, viz :—that Tom Ferguson didn't pick that note out of the spittoon.

This week the lawyers had been trying their hands at the work of legal [re]form. I always notice that the less a man knows about law the more eager he is to reform it.

Bethune, Hodgins, and other youthful Chancery practitioners have spent the interval since last session trying to find some defects in the law that wanted rectifying, so that they could get a chance to spread themselves in speeches showing how their extensive practice had revealed these evils.

It is a cheap way of advertising. They get whole columns in the *Globe* and it don't cost them a cent.

Bethune, I notice, wants to interdict habitual drunkards. I consider this measure fraught with danger to a large and influential element of the body politic. Also the body political.

But so long as that important class are so strongly represented in the halls of legislation there is no fear that their constitutional privileges will be abridged.

The habitual drunkard must be protected. If he is to be interdicted what numerons familiar forms should we miss from the house ?

JIMUEL BRIGGS, 'D.B.,
Graduate of Cobocconk University.

Toronto, Jan. 24th, 1873.

LETTER X.

The Visit to the Deaf and Dumb Institute—McKellar's Brilliant Strategy—Two days gained—Proceedings in the House—The "Briggs Outrage"—Enquiries—The Elgin Association Accounts.

Editor Coboconk Irradiator:—

MCKELLAR has a Napoleonic mind. He has a lofty and commanding an intellect or political tactics as the great Corsican had for military strategy.

When the Red Republicans, the Clear Grits of that day, used to threaten the stability of his bayonet-propped throne, by clamouring for Income Franchise and Surplus Distribution, he had a way of distracting the attention of the people by getting up a war with foreign powers.

When Mars looms red and lurid on the horizon and the tocsin, whatever that is, calls "to arms," a man soon quits fooling about Surplus Distribution and such like abstract questions, and devotes his energies to dodging the draft or raising money to hire a substitute.

Old Nap knew his little biz, he did. He saw more war than Thaddeus of *War-saw*.

McKellar profits by his example. When the House

gets unduly inquisitive about when the Government is going to bring down its measures, he diverts the legislative mind from the questions at issue by organizing excursions.

On Wednesday the house excorted to Belleville, on a visit to the Deaf and Dumb Asylum.

We, that is the Ministry and I, had a long discussion previously as to the direction the excursion should take.

Mowat, suggested the Central Prison now in course of erection, and Crooks thought the rejected site of the Model Farm at Mimico would be preferable.

"But there's nothing to see there," said Scott, who hadn't quite got hold of the idea of the proposed exhibition.

"That don't signify, said McKellar, "all we want is an excuse for a sleigh-ride and a dinner to gain a little time and give the members something to think of besides our short-comings. If there ain't much to see there now, there will be in the summer time, when the crop of Canada thistles we put in last fall comes up."

"Well Mimico be it then," said Crooks.

"Hold up," said I decisively, "Mimico won't do, neither will the Central Prison."

"Why not," said Pardee.

"Not far enough off" I replied, "the proceedings could not be spun out to more than a few hours, and

we'd be back in time for an evening session, so you'd be as badly off as ever. Why not go to the Deaf and Dumb Asylum at Belleville."

"Delay the return train as long as possible, have plenty of good strong corn-juice on board and half the members will be too languid for business next day.

"That will be a clear gain of two days instead of one."

They all saw the force of my reasoning, and gave their adherence to the plan.

"Briggs" said McKellar, "you're a genius, you're an under-rated man!"

"I own up," said I, with becoming humility "I'm a good deal under-rated. The assessors have only got me down for \$200, and my retiring disposition is such that I didn't like to undeceive them, not even to receive a vote under the Income Franchise Bill."

You will accompany us, of course, said McKellar to the Premier.

"I really haven't given the matter sufficient consideration yet," said Mowat. "There are reasons, weighty ones, too, I have no doubt, why the presence of the head of the Ministry would be desirable on such an occasion, and then on the other hand, it may doubtless have suggested itself to some reflective minds that the exigencies of the country demand my remaining at the seat of Government."

"However, if upon the whole, it should seem advisable, after mature deliberation, I may perhaps be enabled to participate in the affair."

Mowat must have a great mind. It takes him so long to make it up.

We started at about eight Wednesday morning. Lieut. Governor Howland and McKellar were the only representatives of the Government on board.

The Minister of Public Works hadn't forgotten my advice respecting spirit, nutriment, and the party presently grew very lively in consequence.

The honest old farmers to whose hands unnumbered petitions for prohibition were entrusted by confiding constituencies, became hilarious, and decanters were speedily emptied.

McKellar winked cunningly at me as much as to say. "Not much chance of a long sitting to-morrow, eh?"

After a weary ride, Belleville was reached and we drove out to the Institute.

I sat next to H. S. Macdonald. He was in a mor-
alizing vein.

"Here," said he, as we approached the building, "is a community of the silent; no gleeful prattle of childhood, no loud contention of debate, no busy hum of conversation ever reverbrates within these walls, where all is mute and voiceless as the grave. Just think of it."

I thought of it a spell and then said " Why that's nothing ; I know one locality in Toronto that is still quieter than even a Deaf and Dumb Institute,"

" I'll bet you five dollars you don't—no I take that back—I was forgetting my little bill to render betting illegal—but where is it anyway ? "

" Why *Dummer* (dumber) street, of course," I briskly responded.

His face assumed an injured expression, and he relapsed into a moody silence.

After being shown through the building we returned to the town, where a dinner had been provided on strictly temperance principles—no liquor without paying for it.

I didn't pay for it, I knew there was a sufficiency on board the cars.

There was the usual amount of speechifying and expressions of mutual admiration, &c.

The party being replete, we took the homeward bound train.

The tedium of the trip was beguiled by numerous stories, songs, and frequent assaults on the fluids so thoughtfully provided.

Springer was the life of the party. He is a highly sufficient Teutonic personage with an inexhaustible fund of anecdote.

We got home early—about four a.m., and McKellar's strategy was successful. The House only sat an

hour or so that afternoon.

As I have already intimated, things have been dull in the House for the last week,

There is considerable activity shown, however, in moving for returns of correspondence, &c., and making enquiries about things.

What do you think? The Opposition are actually making enquiries about me.

Rykert has a notice in the paper that he will move for copies of all correspondence, &c., relating to the appointment of Jimuel Briggs, D.B., Graduate of Coboconk University, as a member of the Commission, to examine land in the vicinity of Coboconk with a view to locating the Model Farm. Also for information as to the remuneration received by the said Briggs in such capacity aforesaid, the duration of the said appointment, the premium paid by the said Briggs to the Government by securing the same, and the manner in which he invested the amount remaining, whether the landlady and laundress of the said Commissioner received their due proportion in the distribution of his surplus, and whether the said Briggs was not at the time in the employ of a certain newspaper, known as the Coboconk *Irradiator*, together with any other information in possession of the Government relating to the said appointment.

Rykert said he considered it a scandal and a dis-

grace that I should be drawing four dollars a day ever since my appointment, when the work only occupied about a week.

Thus, in addition to the Proton outrage and the Elgin outrage, we have now the "Briggs outrage. The Opposition are acting in a most outrageous manner.

It'll cost more to get up and print this return and circulate ten thousand copies of it than would pay my humble salary for another six months,

I met McKellar in the lobby just now—"So Mac" said I, "I see that pestilent little Rykert has got a motion through calling for the accounts of the Elgin Association. You're fixed at last."

He smiled complacently. "Yes, my unsophisticated young friend," said he. "They're quite welcome to the accounts. They show all right, but It'll take a smarter man than Charley Rykert to get at the sums I *didn't* account for.

And yet some people say McKellar has no business capacity!

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D.B.,
Graduate of Coboconk University.
Toronto, Jan. 30.

LETTER XI.

The Proton Outrage—Briggs suggests the Abolition of Proton to Mowat—The Premier's Objections—Surplus Distribution Deputations—Whipping in the Members of the Party—McKellar's Character Analysed.

Editor Coboconk Irradiator.

THE Proton outrage business has bothered the Government considerable this session.

Not a single observation could be made by any member on the Ministerial benches respecting those themes ever dear to the Grit heart—the frightful corruption at Ottawa, and the depravity of Sir John A. Macdonald, but what some cuss on the Opposition side would disconcert the speaker by yelling out “Proton.”

Members from the rural constituencies would get up and begin to speak their little pieces based upon the *Globe* editorials, and suddenly, when vigorously denouncing the Ottawa Ministry, a gentle whisper, low as the sighing of a midsummer zephyr, of “How about Proton?” would cause them to wilt like a bed bug when you drop coal oil on him.

The effect was very demoralizing on the Party.

The average Grit can't orate worth a cent without

abusing Sir John and talking about corruption. Members had fixed up their speeches during the summer and put in plenty of high-sounding phrases about corruption and purity of elections and so forth, and now the half of them were afraid to speak them all along because of the Proton cry.

Glancing around from my lofty standpoint, poised as it were in the empyrean heights of commanding intellect, I scanned with eagle orb the arena of political conflict and saw at once that something had to be done.

I saw Mowat about it early last week.

"Mr. Mowat," said I, "this Proton business is telling strongly against the Reform cause."

"I know it," he replied, "it hurts us like the developements in the Elgin Association affair."

Mowat never swears—but he came awful near it that time. The company he's got into is beginning to lower his moral tone, and after a while he'll be able to lie, steal, and swindle without scruple or remorse just like Scott, McKellar and the rest.

"Well," I resumed, "why don't you stop it?"

"I only wish we could."

"It's easy enough. Just abolish the Proton outrage."

"Abolish it! How?"

"Why, by a vote of the House. You have a ma-

majority of two to one at your back, and yet you permit this scandal to exist. Vote it down. Blot it out of existence! You can do anything by Act of Parliament. Not a soul of your following dare vote against you while the surplus remains intact for fear you might shut down on them."

"Bring in a resolution declaring that it is all right, that there ain't any such township on the map, that Lewis used his influence to elect Lauder, that he never was a land valuator, that McKellar is an honest man and incapable of such a transaction—in short, any absurdity you like, and get the Party to vote it through."

"Then when any one hints at Proton, you triumphantly annihilate him by pointing to the overwhelming majority by which McKellar has been exonerated."

"But, my dear sir," said Mowat, in astonishment, "the House would never support such a resolution. Just think of the facts disclosed in the report, signed, too, by several of our own Party. Why, they would have to repudiate their own words."

"What of that. 'So much the worse for the facts. I tell you this House will vote for any mortal thing you like to propose, so long as the Surplus Distribution is in doubt."

"Delay your resolutions on that question for a little while longer, and if any of the members show a disposition to weaken on the Proton resolutions, you can strengthen them by a mild hint that if they don't support you their constituencies will be marked down as 'satisfied' when on the Surplus Distribution List."

"I'm afraid the House would hardly be prepared to go as far as you suggest, but I'll consult my colleagues about it at once," said the Premier. "If we could possibly get such a resolution adopted it would forever silence the tongue of detraction, and put to flight the armies of the aliens."

"Say, boss, here's a whole squad of country looking fellows says they're bound to see you. It is a delegation from somewhere or other," said a clerk rushing in.

"Amster-DAM ! !" observed Mowat, in his most strenuous tones.

As I said before, Mowat never swears—so he conscientiously threw in the first two syllables to get a chance to bring the last out with proper emphasis.

"Tell them I'm not in. Say I'm sick in bed—make any excuse you like," said the Premier. "I can't and I won't see another man on that business to-day."

So saying he started on a run for the back door,

climbed the wood shed with an agility that would have done credit to a younger man, jumped down into an alley, and ran for home, just as the deputation becoming impatient crowded into the room.

My advice was speedily followed by the Government. McKellar and Scott fell in with the idea at once, and Mowat reluctantly consented to bring in a series of resolutions abolishing Proton.

As I anticipated, they didn't have much trouble with the Grit members. A few were inclined to be restive, but little judicious pressure on the surplus question fetched them.

Prince seemed rather disposed to go back on us at first. He was one of the Proton Committee, and didn't like eating his words.

"Why how on earth can I face my constituents after stultifying myself for repudiating my opinions in that manner," said he to McKellar.

"Oh, well for the matter of that my dear fellow, it won't be the first time," said the latter, "besides your opinions don't amount to much, you know, and your constituents must be quite prepared for it by your course in deserting Sandfield. A good slice of the surplus will quiet them."

When the eventful night arrived on Tuesday last, I was detailed from duty in the lobby, with instructions

to look after the shaky members.

If the Ministry had reason to think any of their followers wouldn't swallow the resolutions they handed them over to me.

I voted them well first and then commenced talking surplus.

When they said "How can I go back to my constituents after giving such a vote?" I would reply "A great deal better than you can without any surplus." That settled them.

I had some difficulty with Prince and Robinson. After we had lubricated the wheels of existence several times, they both promised to speak and vote right, but the former shirked the vote, and the latter protested that he had left his tuning fork at home, and didn't think he could strike the right key.

"Key? *Whish-key!*" said the member for Essex, in an incoherent tone, assumed of course to give point to a very feeble attempt at a joke.

Prince's humorisms are not equal to those of *Mr. Punch*, to whom his style of facial architecture presents a strong resemblance.

However at last the debate came to an end, and the House abolished Proton by an overwhelming majority.

Now that there isn't any more Proton, the Grit embers can bring on their remarks about Sir John

McDonald and Ottawa corruption, without fear of being told "you're another."

We are told that you can't make men moral by Act of Parliament, but the vote has given McKellar a first-rate moral character. Hold up, though I was forgetting the Elgin Association swindle.

However, if Mowat will only keep his surplus distribution resolutions back long enough we can white-wash him on that question too.

McKellar is a fine man ; I have lately analyzed his character, according to the latest scientific methods, with the following results :—

Philanthropy—F 3-C 8 \$—D. B.

Rhetorical powers—C2. Z 7-Pq.

Political sagacity—D. F. 0 0 4-X 4.

Agricultural knowledge—A, M 2, B 16, P

Moral character—23 L? V 3-E 19 !

That's the kind of man McKellar is.

You will doubtless, observe that this system is the same as employed by Prof. Mills in his celebrated analysis of the soil of the Mimico farm.

I'll back Coboconk University against Ann Arbor any day.

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D.B.,
Graduate of Coboconk University

Toronto, Feb. 12.

LETTER XII.

The Agricultural College--No Chance for Cobocank--A Close Vote.

Editor Cobocank Irradiator.

THE Agricultural College business is settled at last, and Guelph takes the prize.

At one time I was not without hopes that my influence might be sufficient to secure this institution for my native village.

I thought that the Government didn't particularly care where it was to be, so long as it wasn't at Mimico, and strenuously urged the claims of Cobocank upon McKellar.

"It wasn't any use. "Lord bless you," said he, "it was fixed long ago that Guelph is to have it. We had to get rid of Peter somehow, so we promised it to him as a consideration for resigning."

"But hadn't been for political exigencies Cobocank might have had a show, and I don't see why it wouldn't have done just as well as the Stone Farm at Guelph."

"Why buy a stone farm for such a purpose? If Mimico is objected to as being a little sandy, what on earth will they say to rocks!" said I, fearing that the ministry had committed some stupendous blunder.

McKellar smiled like an amiable hippopotamus, and explained that the Stone was personal rather than geological in its signification, and I felt relieved, though sorry to think there was no chance for my native village.

Had I been enabled to secure that College for them and gone to visit the scene of boyhood's days I should, doubtless, have received a perfect ovation. They would have treated me like a cobo-conqueror!

But it was not thus to be.

There was a lively debate Tuesday when the affair came up in the House, and the Government after a while got to feel pretty shaky.

I was deeply impressed with some of the arguments adduced in favour of the change.

In the first place, there was Prof. Mills report condemning Mimico because the land was too much F 3 O 4—? H and not enough P Q 2 \$ A 14—B, and tungstates uniting with the protoxide of iron eliminated the vital elements of hyperchloride of solatium, and consequently caused the presence of phosphoretic diapason.

That fetched the rustic Grits. They did not understand a word of it, and consequently greatly admired the Professors massive intellect.

The best way to argue with an uneducated cuss is to mystify him.

Some of them weren't convinced, however, Sinclair

met me in the lobby, and said, "Hech, Maister Briggs, I dinna think muckle o' yon Professor."

"Why so?"

"Didna he say something about ox hide o' iron? The man's a gowk I'll tell ye. Wha iver heard o' siccan a things as an ox hide o' iron? But likely the puir body never saw an ox in his life and thinks ox hides are made to or ler. He's an eediot."

Crooks went for Guelph strong on the point of economy. His speech gave me some new ideas.

It seems I've been very economical all the time and never once suspected it.

The Government has spent \$35,000 changing this site, and are going to save money by using the old building on the lot.

I have wanted a new pair of pants for some time. Last week I borrowed five dollars from Mowat to get them, but afterwards concluded to invest about half of it in liquid nutriment.

Still, upon the whole, I save money by the plan, because I have concluded to make the old pants do me for a while longer—probably till I receive a remittance from you, which looks far off in the dim vista of futurity.

The Government is pretty close run on that question, and I had to help them through by lobbying.

It was pretty tough work—I had lost my best hold by the publication of those surplus resolutions.

If Mowat would only have taken my advice and kept them back till he had got all the rest of his measures through, he would have smoother sailing.

Nine majority was all we had when the vote was taken, and it was hard work to get that.

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D.B.,

Graduate of Coboconk University.

Bowmanville, March 14.

LETTER XIII.

Briggs Goes to Ottawa—Abolition of the Pass System—Ottawa and its Inhabitants—Les Miserables—An Opposition Caucus—A Bilingual Speech—The Position of the Party—A Melancholy Prospect—Cash v. Credit.

Editor Coboconk Irradiator :

HAVING seen Mowat and his colleagues through their difficulties,

"And all the clouds that lowered upon their front,
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried,"

as the great dramatist observes, I took my departure for the Dominion capital to pilot the Opposition safely into the promised land of office.

Mackenzie telegraphed Mowat to know if he could spare me for a while, as the situation was becoming critical, and he appreciated my talents as a critic.

"Well, I really don't know about this," said the Premier dubiously. "The session seems likely to last a month or so, and we may want you—but then, on the other hand, Mackenzie's request seems urgent, and——"

"Oh, he'd better go, by all means," said E. B. Wood, interrupting a lengthy debate which Mowat was commencing to carry on with himself, *more suo*. Go up, young man. Go up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

I went up. Mowat handed me some surplus to de-



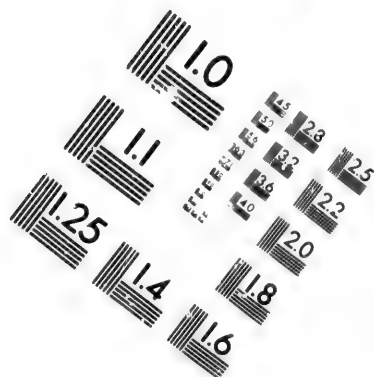
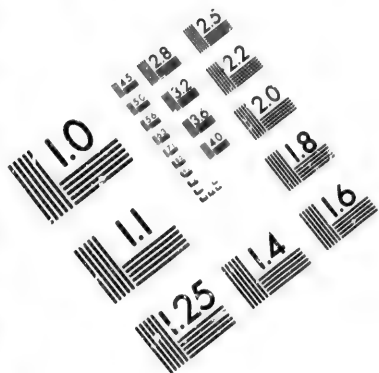
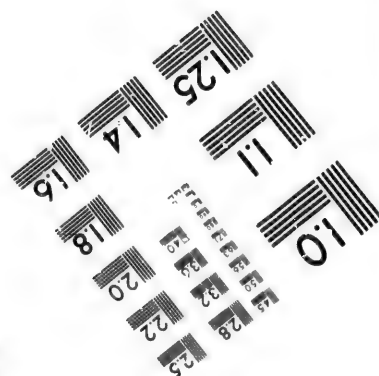
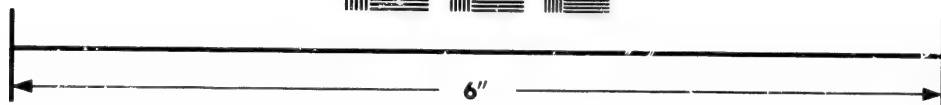
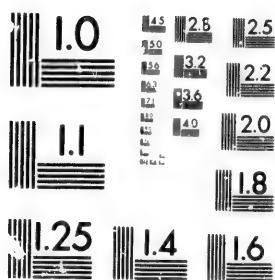


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fray my expenses, and gave me his blessing and a copy of the *Globe*, exhorting me to read it regularly every evening before retiring to repose.

Thus equipped, pecuniarily and morally, I was speedily *en route*.

I had'nt been long on board the cars before the conductor made his rounds and observed, "Ticket, sir."

"That's all right," said I, with a graceful wave of the hand; "I belong to the press."

"That's played," he said with a sardonic smile. "We shut down on free passes long since. How far are you going?"

"To Ottawa," I replied.

"Eight dollars and ten cents," he laconically rejoined.

"But," said I, determined not to yield the point and the shekels without a final struggle. "Consider that the press is the ægis of our boasted liberties, the palladium, as it were, of the rights wrested by our forefathers from the mailed hands of a grasping oligarchy, and secured to us by the constitution which we all so justly venerate."

"I'll take that eight dollars and ten cents," replied the remorseless being. "You can't dead head the Grand Trunk, not if you are David Mills, and you might just as well save them remarks for your next essay in the *Canadian Monthly*."

I weakened and distributed my surplus, with the remark that he need not add insult to injury by confounding me with the Sage of Bothwell.

If any accidents happen on the Grand Trunk, please record them in double leaded long primer, with sensation headings. A railway which don't respect the press deserves no consideration at our hands.

The remainder of my journey was accomplished without incident or accident worthy of note. I was in hopes that the train would have run off the track, in order that I might have had an opportunity of denouncing the management of the line, but it didn't, and I arrived here in safety.

Ottawa is a peculiar community. The permanent inhabitants consist of civil service officials, lumberers, and hotel keepers, the transient ones of M.P.'s, lobbyists, and members of the press.

Its growth has been rapid. It abounds in oldest inhabitants, who tell marvellous anecdotes about the way land had risen in value, and how a few years ago they could, if they had only thought of it, have bought up half the city at a dollar an acre, or some such ridiculously low figure.

I met one of them the other day. Said he, "This city is growing very fast.

"Yes," said I. "The luxuries induced by the accumulation of wealth and the consequent innovations upon the primitive social customs of our ancestors,

doubtless tend to a style of living which verges upon dissipation and extravagance."

"No, no," said he, "I mean that it is extending rapidly. You see all those new buildings in that direction?"

"Yes," said I.

"Well, I remember the time when there wasn't a solitary building west of here."

"You do, eh? I see you, and go you ever so numerously better. I remember the time when there wasn't a solitary building west of Bay street, Toronto."

"You are a ——— Grit editor," he indignantly exclaimed. "I'll bet you five dollars you don't. Why I was in Toronto twenty years ago, and there were hundreds of buildings in the locality you mention."

"Of course there were," said I, "consequently you must perceive that I am correct in stating that there wasn't a *solitary* building there. They were all together in blocks."

He saw the point and set 'em up.

As we were taking our social reinvigorator together he said—"Beg pardon, but what constituency do you represent?"

"The true patriot," I replied with *hauteur*, "is so devoted to the interests of our common country that he scorns to identify himself with any particular section, but labours assiduously for the welfare of the whole community."

"Then you belong to the Civil Service, I suppose?"

"No," said I.

"Then you *must* be a member of the press."

"Right you are. I represent the Coboconk *Irradiator*, whose scintillations permeate the remotest corner of our Dominion, shedding its genial rays over the entire political arena.

"I knew it," said my interrogator. "I was sure you must be a Bohemian if you didn't belong to the House or the Civil Service."

The tone of Ottawa society is apt to be somewhat flashy and superficial; they have a *Chaudiere* (shoddy air) there.

Party feeling runs high. "Have you seen the Devil's Hole," said a debased Tory cuss to me on Tuesday last, alluding to a stupendous natural curiosity in the neighbourhood.

"No," said I. "Haven't time. Got to attend a Reform caucus this afternoon."

"Oh," said he sarcastically, "that'll do you just as well. A Grit caucus must be the next thing to a *Devil's Hole*."

Well, it did remind me somewhat of the cave of Trophimus mentioned in classic annals. When a man once entered the gloomy depths of its cavernous recesses, the terrifying sights presented to his vision so impressed themselves upon him, that thenceforward

"melancholy marked him for her own" and care overshadowed his features.

A more dispiriting, cheerless assemblage I have never witnessed. Funeral gloom prevailed, Mackenzie was sour, cold and unsympathetic as usual.

Dorion is a cadaverous, billious looking individual with the corners of his mouth drawn down as if dissatisfied with everything in existence.

Holton resembles the deacon of a hardshell Baptist church where the preacher starves on a salary of \$300 a year—and the congregation never put anything but coppers in the plate.

Blake wasn't there to add to the prevailing sombreness by his malignant scowl and the grating acerbity of his sarcasms.

Altogether their dismal, woebegone appearance suddenly dampened the exuberance of my enthusiasm for the cause.

"This crowd don't look as if they were going in to win" thought I, as they slowly rose to greet me on my entrance.

Having been introduced by Mackenzie, I was invited to address the meeting. I was on the point of doing so in English, when I suddenly remembered that numerous of the members were of French extraction, and might feel slighted if I did not use their language.

I therefore concluded to effect a judicious compro-

mise by gracefully intertwining the choicest flowers of speech in each tongue in a beauteous garland as a tribute at the shrine of national union, and thus proceeded :

“Gentilhommes—Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking, I realize—je comprend, so to speak, le verite d’un observation d’un auteur Francois famuex. ‘Cest le premier pas qui coute.’ So does my friend Mac here. He has been trying to take the “*Premier pas*” for some time—mais il est tres difficult. Sir John has been slightly too beaucoup pour lui. Comprennez ? Ja’i arrive ce matin pour assister dans un gr-r-ande bouleversement. (Cheers.) That truly great and good man George Brown has observed, avec la sagacite d’un homme d’etat. “Nos lois, nos langue et no institutions,” aud I can only observe that le parti Grit is destined to go on dons le warpath de victoire—conquering aud to conquer under the broad banner of Reform—N’est ce pas ? When our ancestors—nos quartrepres—left their homes and their firesides—pour aller au wilderness et pour etablir un grand nation—little, little did they think that a day would arrive quand le mandit Sire Jean A. Macdonald—un nom execrable par tout bon patriots—would trample the constitution of our lacerated country to the dust. (Cheers). Ayant dit jusqu’ici je resumerai mon fauteuil, amid enthusiastic applause.”

This mixing up of languages, like the whiskey and

bitters in a cocktail, may seem strange to your readers, but it is the regular Parliamentary style of doing things.

At the beginning of the session the *Globe* had a good deal to say about the crumbling away which was going to happen when the legislative machine got in running order, and sure enough considerable crumbling eventuated that same evening.

The trouble was that it was us that crumbled instead of the Tories. There is no more crumble in them than in a piece of hard tack, but our crowd succumbed to the pressure like sponge cake.

I tried to do some lobbying, but it was no use. I had no hold on them, and when I drew on my brilliant imagination and depicted in glowing colours the glorious future of the Reform Party and the spoils which would be shared among the faithful when we took office in a week or so, they smiled compassionately on me as one void of understanding, and passed on to vote for the government.

There is any number of soreheads—fellows that think the Ministry haven't done the right thing by them and their friends—and had we been able to show a strong front earlier in the session we might have secured them.

But the time for a *coup d'etat* has gone by. The Independents and the soreheads—the loose fish and all

those who naturally gravitate to the winning side—have determined that the Government is the strongest.

That majority of sixteen settled the business, and the doubtful members have concluded that they had better "bear the ills they have than fly to others that they know not of."

They may get something from the present Ministry, but there is no chance for them with us. So the sixteen majority has swollen to twenty-five, and we are once more compelled to face the unpalatable prospect of opposition for an indefinite period.

When you try to influence members it makes a wonderful difference whether you can offer them something tangible or only something contingent.

Cash always goes further than credit, especially when the time of payment is fixed at a period that may never arrive.

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D. B.

Graduate of Coboconk University.

Ottawa, March 19th.

LETTER XIV.

The Parliament Buildings—Dangers of the Interior—An Official and his Duties—English and French Oppositionists—Centre Toronto Election—The Prohibitory Question—The Dodge Scandal.

Editor Coboconk Irradiator :

THE Parliament Buildings are like Senator Mc Master—lofty and *imposing*.

I am not an archi-tect—not even an Archy McKellar—so I cannot enter upon a detailed description of the facades—Corinthian columns, turrets, buttresses and escarpments—and if I did your readers wouldn't understand me, though they might admire in dazzled ignorance.

Suffice it to say they are very big, substantial and massive, and cost untold shekels.

The internal arrangements are decidedly labyrinthine.

Have you ever seen the opera of the *Grande Duchesse* ? No, of course, you haven't.

Dramatic art is yet in its infancy at Coboconk. It hasn't got any further than recitations of "Brutus and Cassius" at school examinations, or at most the condition of the great moral drama of "Ten Nights in a Bar-Room," by the members of the Aquabibulatory Temple, No. 216, S.O.T.

If, however, you have seen the *Grande Duchesse*, you would likely remember the manner in which *Baron Grog* was conducted to an interview with the *Duchesse*. "He traverses a long corridor, ascends a flight of stairs, crosses a large hall, descends another flight of stairs then goes along another corridor—re-ascends, traverses another corridor, then re-descends—is conducted through a spacious apartment, then re-descends, &c."

Well, that's just the way you go through the Ottawa Parliamentary and Departmental buildings.

Traditions are extant of strangers who have recklessly ventured in there without a guide, and, not returning for a few days, have finally been discovered by the expeditions organized by anxious friends, in some remote corner, in a famished condition, and utterly bewildered as to their route.

The other day, in cleaning up one of the offices, which had been but little used, a mouldering skeleton was discovered behind a pile of blue books and such like rubbish. It is supposed to be the frame work of one of these venturesome explorers who had thus paid the penalty of his rashness.

There are numerous janitors, ushers and similar functionaries around. They belong to the Civil Service, though it mightn't always strike you from their general style of address.

I was going cautiously along the other day whit-

ting the pillars and walls at intervals with my jack-knife, so that I might be sure of being able to retrace my steps and find my way out again, when unto me a portly grey-headed individual quoth, in manner and form, that is to say :—

“Where are you going ?”

“Straight ahead, it’s all right,” said I, trying to execute a flank movement and sidle around him.

“You can’t go in,” said he, planting himself athwart my path.

“But,” said I, “I belong to the press, which I need hardly inform you is—&c., &c.” Here I inserted the neat little speech I always made at my public dinners in replying to the toast of “The Press.”

I have known street-car and even railway conductors mollified by that speech. I have seen gruff and imperturbable doorkeepers at concerts and theatres yield before its permeating eloquence, and reluctantly under the portals with grumbling observations concerning another “dead-head”—it has secured me access to unnumbered socials and tea-meetings, but it failed to soften that case-hardened janitor.

“It’s no use,” said he, “you can’t pass this way unless you’re a member.”

Just as I was turning sadly away with the determination to pen a scathing article on “Official Inso-

lence" for your columns, Mackenzie approached and I sought his intervention.

"Can ye no let the mon pass wi' 'out making sic-can an' unco fash about it," said he, and the cerebrian vigilance of the bloated official at once relapsed.

"By the way mon," said the Opposition leader sternly eyeing him. "What are yere jewties here."

"Duty, duty!" replied the cuss, confusedly, as if a new idea has just dawned upon his bewildered intellect. "Duty did ye say."

"Ay, sir, that jost what I did say—can ye no gi' me a straight answer instead o' standin' there glow-in there like a gomeril?"

He replied that he was deputy-assistant something or other.

"Ay, but what are you pit here to do."

"Do you see that deer there?" he briskly answered as if a sudden idea has just struck him—pointing to an elaborate piece of sculpture on one of the pillars.

"Yes."

"Then my duty is to keep my eye on that deer, and if there is any chance of his spoiling the furniture to remove him."

"Oh!" said Mackenzie briefly, as he hastily walked towards the reading-room.

Things had been looking up somewhat since last week—and the Reformers are more cheerful.

The melancholy and morose temperament which distinguishes the party leaders on our side is mostly confined to the English element. The French Oppositionists are a much more cheerful, amiable and light hearted set.

In fact I met one of them to-day who looked quite Joly.

It is a relief to encounter their *politesse* and vivacity after the glum and gloomy unsociability of the Ontario Grits.

We had a victory on Monday. To be sure it wasn't much of a one, but then we have to be thankful for small mercies just now.

The election petition against Wilkes, of Centre Toronto, was thrown out by an overwhelming majority of four.

It would have been too bad if we had lost that seat, considering the amount of surplus spent on it.

Wilkes says he didn't spend a cent, and I believe him. He had conscientious scruples against fooling away money in that manner—so long as his party friends were willing to bleed freely for the good of the cause—"Watch and prey," is his motto.

It pays to be high-toned and conscientious after all.

Wood sent us a congratulatory telegram comprising several verses of Scripture, but unfortunately omitted the customary ceremony of paying for the message, so Wilkes had very reluctantly to do so.

Never shall I forget the expression of disgust with which he threw down the message after a brief glance at its contents. "The idea," said he, "of the man telegraphing to me asking 'Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing.' Its absurd, and its unpaid too—positively blasphemous," he thoughtfully added.

The party are considerably disgusted with the action of the Ontario House in sending those temperance petitions here.

It was so convenient for members during their canvass, when bothered by delegations of enthusiastic temperance men, to be able to reply that the cause had their warmest sympathies and they were ready to promote it by every means—in their power; but *unfortunately* the matter was in the hands of the Local Legislature. Now, the Ontario Ministry have cunningly extricated themselves from the dilemma and put their friends here in a pretty awkward fix."

I don't know what the party are going to do about it, but both Blake and Mackenzie are down on Mowat for shirking the responsibility of dealing with

it, and then sending in a petition for this Parliament to do what they dare not undertake.

"The party must take some action on this question" said I to Blake, "now that the motion in favour of Prohibition has been carried unanimously at Toronto."

"Carried unanimously"—said he scornfully. "Carried *pusillanimously* you mean. Well, I suppose we had better have a committee appointed to consider the question." Accordingly, on Monday the motion for a committee was. Skim-milk Bodwell took the lead, being considered the fittest man to initiate a milk-and-water policy.

When the question comes up that you don't know how to deal with, it's always best to appoint a committee. That gives you time to deliberate at any rate.

The Dodge scandal has caused no end of a sensation. It was a pretty good story if it had only held water.

We calculated that he would have voted right with the exposure hanging over his head, but he went back on us—and hence the best we can do is to utilize him as an awful warning to similar offenders in the future.

But after all it didn't make much difference whichever way he voted. Ramsay was bound to ventilate his story anyhow, but couldn't make use of the *Globe*

until Brown was sure that Dodge was lost to the party. — — —

Supposing that he had gone into opposition, and Ramsay had then asked the *Globe* to help him in working his little blackmailing job, just fancy how quit that Canon would have *gone off* with his false report.

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D. B.,

Graduate of Coboconk University.

Ottawa, March 27th.

LETTER XV.

A New Arrival in Ottawa—Gordon Brown's Views of the Situation—Mowat goes back on Briggs—The Pacific Railway Resolution—A "Citizen" Joke—Seats in the Grit Cabinet at a Discount—Another Great Moral Victory—Gordon Wants to go Home—McKellar's Defence.

Editor Cobocok Irradiator :

ABOUT the first familiar face I saw after rising from my canoe couch (damask), on Tuesday morning, was that of Gordon Brown of the *Globe*.

He had just alighted from the 'bus at the door of the Russell House. He bore a travel stained valise in his North-east hand, and an aspect of languor and general *aucges-peiltishness*' as the Dutch say, suffused his grizzled physiognomy, the result of a weary night's journey.

He smiled begningly upon me and said, "Well Briggs, how's things?"

And did you come to terms? Is he disposed to offer anything reasonable?"

"Pshaw!" was the reply, "Can't do any business with him. I wasn't disposed to be anyway unreasonable. I said I'd take timber limits, or a contract for building some of the new institutions in Ontario, or even municipal debentures; anything at all worth

money. Well, what do you think he offered ?”

“ Haven’t any idea.”

“ A seat in the new Grit Cabinet.”

“ Bah !”

Exeunt laughing heartily.

The eventful hour at length arrived, slowly and pompously did Huntingdon elucidate his resolution which was no sooner moved than the vote was taken without a speech *pro* or *con*, protracted or concise.

Defeated again ! Is it possible ? Has the bright star of promise again vanished in Cimmerian gloom ? Alas it is too true.

“ The majority against the resolution is thirty-one,” said the English Clerk of the House who singularly happens to be a Frenchman.

Le majorite contre la resolution est trente et un ” observed the French Clerk, to make assurance doubly sure.

Gordon Brown seized his hat and valise and started for the railway station. “ The subsequent proceedings interested him no more.”

I accompanied him part of the way. “ At all events,” said he, “ We have won a great moral victory. Did you notice how the ministry sat in their seats without saying a word ? It is to be regretted however, that they cling to office with a tenacity which

has for the present thrown a damper on our hopes.'

"Yes," said I, "I never before saw such *dam-per-tenacity*. *Au revoir*."

I notice by the papers that shortly before the prorogation of the Ontario House McKellar explained his connection with the Elgin Association.

His defence is truly a gem worthy of being enshrined in a poetic setting for preservation for all times, which I have endeavoured to do as follows:—

McKELLAR'S DEFENCE.

I appear to-night before ye,
Although time scarce affords,
To refute that little story
About the Elgin Frauds.
Its a monstrous fabrication,
A slander base and black;
I didn't steal the money—
But I'm going to pay it back.

I never went to Glasgow,
The Rev. King was sent,
Why, I was home attending
In my place in Parliament.
T'is true the folks in Scotland,
In giving were not slack,
But I didn't steal the money,
Though I'm bound to pay it back.

I never ran that mission,
Nor took a single cent,
Though my influence and position
To the cause were freely lent.

Here's the Secretary's letter,
To prove in white and black,
That I *couldn't* steal the money—
But I mean to pay it back.

It's a wicked Tory libel
That I pocketed the rocks
See these half dozen letters
To the Rev. Horrocks Cocks.
The writers say they freely gave
To elevate the black.
Now, *would* I steal the money?
Why, of course, I'll pay it back.

Yes, I *did* receive subscriptions.
From one ungodly bent;
His name, I think, was Millar,
He lives in Fenchurch street
The vengeful cuss had followed me
Like a sleuth-hound on the track
Just as if I'd stole his money!
But I mean to pay it back.

I appeal unto my record,
Spotless, unstained and fair;
I look within my conscience
And find approval there;
I swear by all that's holy
It's a slanderous attack—
That I never stole the money—
But I'll surely pay it back.

Sir, we spent some of that money
To improve the negro's case;
And as voting for Grit candidates
Is a sign of saving grace;
We converted several hundreds
To *Brown* principles, though black,
Do you call that stealing mission funds?
But I'm bound to pay it back.

What became of all the balance ?
Who pocketed the cash ?
Why, you know commercial ventures
Are liable to smash.
We lost it all in business ;
Of the details I've lost track ;
But I'll swear I never stole it—
Still I mean to pay it back.

On. have ye got no sympathy
For the poor down-trodden slave,
In whose behalf philanthropists
Their cash so freely gave ?
Do ye scorn and hate the negro,
Because his skin is black ?
No, I didn't steal that money—
But still I'll pay it back.

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D.B.,
Graduate of Coboconk University.
Ottawa, April 3rd.

LETTER XVI.

Briggs Concludes to Leave Ottawa—An Uncompromising Hotel Clerk—Qualifying for an Emigration Agency—The "Free Press" down on Briggs—Jimuel Emulous of the Fame of Cocks and Whellams—Return to Toronto.

Editor Cobocoink Irradiator :

A FEW days since I concluded to leave Ottawa. My decision was somewhat accelerated by the uncompromising attitude of the clerk of the Russell House, who, on Tuesday morning, drew my attention to the fact that my little bill was unsettled.

"Not that we entertain the slightest suspicion of you, Mr. Briggs," said that urbane functionary, "but you see we have so many office-seekers and people with claims on the Government stopping here, that we have to be careful—very careful—and cannot discriminate."

"I fully understand," said I. "Let me see, I think Horrocks Cocks (known in polite circles as "Roosters,") once stayed there."

"He did—he did," said the clerk, with a mournful sigh.

"Oh, then, that fully accounts for your affecti onate

solicitude. But don't be uneasy, I'll square up this afternoon, sure."

A minute or two afterwards I softly glided to my chamber, seized my travelling-bag, and made my exit as speedily as possible.

I hope none of your readers will misconstrue this action, I solemnly pledge my word of honour to pay that money as soon as I am able. Further explanations will be made "at the proper time."

The train don't leave till evening, so I had considerable time on my hands before I could proceed on my journey, like

"Groat O'Ryan, sloping slowly to the West." as the poet laureate has it, though he don't mention why O'Ryan found it necessary to slope.

I therefore concluded to take a last fond look at the arena of debate, the halls 'neath whose lofty dome the assembled wisdom of the Dominion convene for mutual vituperation.

When the time for the departure of the train drew nigh, bidding a cordial adieu to my Parliamentary and Bohemian friends,—not forgetting Mr. White, the father of the gallery—a white man in every respect, may his shadow never wilt—I meandered towards the station.

On my way I bought a *Free Press*, and judge of my
y

feelings when my eye rested on the following paragraph.

"HOTEL DEAD BEAT.—The gentlemanly proprietor of the Russell House has been victimized by an individual styling himself Jimuel Briggs, D.B., and professing to be a graduate of Coboconk University. He has been staying at that establishment for some weeks, during which time he has never paid a cent for his board. This morning he was asked to settle his bill, which he promised to do in a few hours, but in the meantime he managed to secure his trunks (?) and depart unobserved. The fellow is plausible in address, talks a good deal of his influence with the Ontario Government, and is evidently a confirmed swindler and impostor, though his claim to the title of D.B. is unquestionable. Pass him round."

I carefully cut out the paragraph and added it to a collection of similar ones in my pocket-book.

On arriving at the station, who should I see on the platform but Mitchell, the proprietor of the *Free Press*.

He looked as if he wished to avoid me, but I rushed towards him, and, grasping him by the hand, exclaimed, "My dear fellow, how shall I ever repay your kindness? It is more than I really could have expected from a comparative stranger. I am truly and sincerely grateful."

"But how? What do you mean?" he stammered out, seemingly much surprised.

"Why, that paragraph in to night's paper?"

"Well, if it ain't true, our columns are open if you wish to correct it."

"Correct it! Not likely. I hope you will do nothing of the sort. Why, you have no idea of the good that little item is going to do me."

"How it can possibly benefit you I can't imagine."

"Why, I want to get a position as Emigration Agent of the Ontario Government. Now you twig."

"Oh, I see," said he, suddenly enlightened.

"I applied to McKellar last fall, and after enquiring into my antecedents, he said they were very well as far as they went, but wouldn't begin to compare with other applicants. 'Here's a man,' he observed, referring to Horrocks Cocks (known in refined circles as "Roosters") who has drawn two hundred and eighty pounds for emigrants sent out by a society that don't exist—has repeatedly been drunk in public—besides doing any quantity of promiscuous bilking, and passing himself off as a clergyman.

"Then look at Creasy J. Whellams—a confirmed swindler from his boyhood—a confidence man—a bogus check operator—a chronic insolvent—who has deserted his family. Why, he collected eight hundred pounds for the victims of the Franco-German war and kept every cent of it! 'Now,' continued McKellar, 'you must admit that you have as yet nothing

to show that will at all compare with these brilliant operations.

“ ‘ You have, it is true, swindled a few boarding-house keepers out of small amounts, and victimised a tradesman or two, but these are very insignificant exploits in comparison, and you can hardly expect to be assigned to the responsible position of Emigration Agent until you give greater evidence of talent.’

“ Since then I have been diligently striving to build up a record such as will satisfy McKellar of my fitness for the office, and consequently feel deeply grateful for the assistance you have rendered me.”

“ Oh, don’t mention it,” said Mitchell.

“ I do hope,” I continued, “ that you will not let this matter rest. Insert another paragraph to-morrow, comprising new and startling developments respecting the character of J. Briggs, D. B. Say that I have been distinguished for furtive proclivities since my earliest infancy ; that when I was a Sunday-school boy, I used to collect money from the public for Japanese Missions and invest it in surreptitious cigars.

“ Tell them that I have for years practised the bogus cheque game on confiding travellers—make out that when I left the University numerous watches and spoons and things also mysteriously vanished—say I have half-a-dozen *aliases*—anything you please, but

don't, oh don't allow the subject to drop on any account.

"Then next fall when the Ontario Government are selecting a fresh batch of agents, I will go and lay before McKellar a record of a long series of swindles, frauds and defalcations that will completely overwhelm Whellams, horrify Horrocks, and satisfy McKellar of my entire worthiness to co-operate with him in the cause of emigration."

He said he would do the best he could, and I bade him adieu, wishing him a merry Good Friday, and a happy Easter.

I managed to borrow enough money from Grit members on board the train to see me through, and on arriving here reported myself at once at headquarters.

"Back from Ottawa?" said Mr. McKellar.
"Couldn't pick up anything, eh?"

"Not likely, so long as our party is in Opposition. How's the machine running?"

"Kind of rough. That Horrocks business is hurting us considerable."

"Has the old sardine been up to anything more?" I queried, afraid that he had made some new advance in depravity that would require a corresponding development on my part.

"That is a very irreverent manner in which to

speak of a minister," replied McKellar.

"Oh, no," said I, "the term is often highly appropriate for a clergyman."

"How so?"

"Because he sometimes goes down into the *aisle*."

"Eh?"

"*Aisle—ile*—Aisle of a church and the ile they keep sardines in. It's a joke. Don't you see?"

He smiled as faintly as it is possible for McKellar to smile and said he wouldn't detain me.

This is the diplomatic expression for "clear out," so I left him to his reflections.

I do hope Horrocks and Whellams won't perpetrate any more swindles yet awhile, so as to give me a chance to catch up to them.

I think I could hold my own if I had a fair start.

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D. B.,

Graduate of Coboconk University.

Ottawa, April 10th.

LETTER XVII.

The South Brant Victory—Bow Park—Brown as a Boss—Kidnaping Emigrants—The "Peculiar Institution" of Yearly Agreements.

Editor Coboconk Irradiator:

WE have achieved a grand Party triumph. South Brant is ours—bought and paid for honestly.

A Normal School, a railway bonus, and a few thousand cash was the price—not dear considering the high price of constituencies these days.

I didn't stay at Brantford until election day, but returned home last week—visiting Bow Park on the way.

Bow Park belongs to the Hon. George Brown. He is an amateur farmer—which gives him an opportunity to make a little political capital with the rural voter by claiming to be one of themselves, and a tiller of the ground.

He raises Durham cattle, and Berkshire hogs, and fall wheat, which cost him about three times as much as if he were to buy them.

Brown is bound to have all the newest and choicest varieties of poultry on his farm.

Two or three years since, when Horrocks Cocks (known in refined circles as "Roosters") first came over, before he had achieved his present notoriety, Brown happened to hear him spoken of incidentally.

He at once wrote to his agent in the old country as follows :—" Send me some of this Horrocks breed of poultry that people are talking about."

Agent wrote back that he had better stick to Shanghai, as the Horrocks species were very expensive, and not a *lay* variety either.

Brown has since been brought into more intimate relations with Horrocks, who is sending him out cheap English emigrants, bound under yearly agreements, at old country rates to work on his farm.

Bow Park is, in fact, similar to the demesne sattuached to the royal residences in France—a *parc aux cerfs* (serfs).

The lord of the manor has also runners out to watch the arrival of emigrants at Toronto, and entrap the unwary into signing yearly agreements at a low figure.

He runs Bow Park " on the European plan." Any of the vassals who neglects to remove his hat on his approach is fined.

Subscription to the *Globe* is compulsory, whether the victims are able to read or not.

If a degenerate Legislature would only give him authority to erect a stocks and whipping post, for the punishment of delinquents, he would be happy.

Even without such authority, he has been known to inflict the torture of the boot, though not in strict accordance with the ancient system.

The boot, in this case, instead of being placed on the leg of the victim, is on that of the operator, and from its formidable dimensions, and his length of limb, produces effects similar to a thunderbolt.

The "Patent Irresistible Kicker for the use of newspaper offices" aint a circumstance to it. Such a machine is quite superfluous in the *Globe* office.

Brown was holding an investigation while I was there, to discover which of his serfs had had the audacity to communicate to the outside world the workings of the "peculiar institution."

He has been so busily engaged in this work that he hasn't yet found time to publish a denial of the statement.

Owing to the inchoate condition of the bill giving Investigating Committees power to administer oaths to witnesses, which hasn't yet received the assent of the Governor-General, he cannot put his vassals on their oaths.

So he has been doing all the swearing himself, and the atmosphere in that section is, in consequence, as blue and hazy as on a day in Indian summer.

I didn't interview Brown, as I knew it was no use approaching him in the humour he was in.

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D. B.,
Graduate of Coboconk University.

Toronto, April 30th.

LETTER XVIII.

The Doom of Horrocks—Edwards Supersedes Him—Horrocks
Roman Ance. —A Man who didn't want to see the Circus.

Editor Coboconk Irradiator :

AS you are doubtless aware by this time Horrocks has been finally abolished.

Edwards had quietly decapitated him and gently glided into the vacancy.

It was much better than to have a troublesome investigation, which might have been unpleasant for Mr Kellar and the rest.

Fortunately, however, there won't be any bother in the House over the business. Horrocks, like a true Christian, has cultivated the virtue of resignation, and died with a high-toned old Roman fortitude worthy his classic appellation.

An eminent genealogist and philologist has traced his descent from Horatius Cocles, who, according to Macauley, "kept the bridge in brave days of old."

It is considerable of a descent, more so than Mowat's celebrated descent from the bench.

Horrocks is worthy of his ancestor in some respects. He could keep a bridge or anything else that he once got a good hold of.

He kept *Brydges* out of his fare when he travelled on the Grand Trunk, although he wasn't able to beat Sir Hugh Allan.

There is only one thing, so far as I know, that he cannot keep, which is sober.

He has been pretty nearly as successful in keeping emigrants out of Canada as Horatius Cocles was in keeping out a lot of emigrants who, under the leadership of Lars Porsena of Clusium, wanted to settle in Rome.

Horatius saw quite a number of them effectually settled, but the rest of them seemed to lose interest in the thing somehow, and went no more a Roving. Horrocks has made a good many people lose interest—and principal also. He himself has no *principle* to lose.

Thus does history repeat itself.

Horrocks, moreover, assumes to be a clergyman, while his ancestor on the other hand was certainly rendered a *layman* by Macauley.

I don't hardly think that McKellar has done the square thing in the business.

This new departure is going to work adversely to my interests.

For some time I've been diligently qualifying myself for appointment by cultivating the same talents which have been so conspicuously displayed by Horrocks and Whellams, and now, when I have establish-

ed a record only inferior to theirs, the whole system is changed.

This deference to what Scott would call a "morbid public sentiment," has knocked on the head. It's mean.

I called on McKellar to remonstrate with him about it.

"Well," said I, "I see Edwards abrogated Horrocks:"

"No, my dear sir," replied McKellar, "don't run away with a wrong impression. He has resigned."

"Yes, I understand all that," I replied. "But why this inconsistency in a Ministry which should rise superior to the gusts of popular passion, and maintain a firm and dignified attitude? You have gone back on the principles upon which Horrocks and Whellams were appointed, and upon which I was led to hope for a similar position."

"You see," said he, with a sigh, "that we have to trim our sails sometimes in accordance with public opinion."

"Yes, your timber *saves*, for instance," I replied. "You have done considerable trimming all along. A fellow never knows where to find you."

"Well, I'm determined you shall be able to find us in the Government offices at any rate; that's the main consideration after all, to which all others are tributary."

"The public is a patient and much enduring animal, but Horrocks was a little too much for them. That's all I have to say on the subject. *Au revoir.*"

There is going to be a circus here to-morrow, and most of the people are going.

I have met one man who ain't though. He is a *Globe* reporter.

He asked me to irrigate my thorax, and as usual I didn't mind. I never do mind on such occasions.

"Going to the circus?" I enquired, as the bartender was eliciting the intoxicants.

"No," he replied; "don't care to go."

"Why? It'll be worth seeing. There will be some surprising exhibitions of gymnastic skill and agility—the most tremendous feats ever witnessed."

"Pshaw, that's nothing. It don't interest me in the least. I can see Brown's tremendous *feet* every day without it's costing me a cent."

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D. B.,

Graduate of Coboconk University.

Toronto, June 5th, 1873.

LETTER XIX.

Briggs Visits London—Enthusiastic Welcome—General Features of the City—The Lunatic Asylum—Jimuel Locked Up on Suspicion of Insanity.

Editor Coboconk Irradiato :—

I took a run up to London this week to recuperate. London is built on a small creek, which they call the River Thames. It is quite a place.

There is so much more land about there than in Toronto that they can afford to make the streets ever so much wider.

They have the usual crowd of hotel runners and hackmen about the station, and they are as hack-rimmonious as so many Grits.

I hadn't disembarked from the cars more than two seconds before a hospitable cuss invited me to tea.

He was a coloured Ethiopian with a label on his cap. He exclaimed, "*Tea—cumsah ?*"

"Thank you," said I, "I don't mind if I do drop round about six and take a cup of tea with you."

"O, go 'long," he exclaimed petulantly.

I went along till I met another man.

"'Riz here?" he kindly enquired, "Oh, yes," I replied, "I've arriv' here."

"Revere House," he observed emphatically.

"Well, said I, "that depends. There are some houses I could not revere—the Ontario Local House, for instance."

He didn't seem to appreciate my brilliant humourisms, for he dropped the conversation, and left me to find a hotel myself.

I hadn't been long in London before I met a Grit. There are Grits here, also. He was leaning against a bar, in a contemplative mood.

"Beautiful weather," said I.

"I'll tell you directly; excuse me a minute," said he, rummaging in his pockets, from which he produced a *Globe*.

He rapidly ran his eye over its columns until he found the item he wanted, read it, and replied in a tone of deliberation, "Yes, sir, as you say, it is beautiful weather. I am sure of it. The *Globe* says so. You are right."

I took a note of that man's name and address. I will mention him to Brown. He should be developed. Such implicit and child-like confidence in these days of scepticism should not waste their sweetness on the desert air.

I went out to see the Lunatic Asylum. I wanted to see the swamp selected by Carling as a site, in order to be posted on the iniquities of Tory misgovernment.

I asked the distance. "Well," said my informant,

"it ain't very far. It's about five drinks and a cigar off if you walk, or two drinks if you ride."

That's a way they have of measuring distances in London.

I rode out. Be sure and spell this right. I mean *rode* in a buggy, not *rowed* in a canoe. The asylum is not accessible by water unless you can obtain a craft similar to the steamer out West that will run when there's a heavy dew on the ground. I kept my eyes peeled for the swamp and rode ever so far past it in consequence. Retracing my steps, I found the asylum, but not the swamp.

I fear it must be a baseless superstition. Or perhaps it has dried up under the influence of pure Party government.

The first man I saw at the asylum was Mathieson, an ex-Bohemian, now the bursar. He *burst* into ejaculation of satisfaction at seeing me.

He introduced me to Dr. Lett, who kindly offered to show me through.

The increase of lunacy is something frightful of late. They are coming in all the time.

While I was there a new arrival came. He wore a downcast expression, and muttered incessantly to himself broken sentences, of which I could only catch such expressions as "Sir Hugh Allan"—"\$343,000"—"American capitalists"—"Betray the country"—"Vile and degenerate corruptionists," &c.

"Poor man," said I, "what is the cause of his derangement?"

"Ah, it's a melancholy case," said the doctor. "He has been reading the Grit papers and trying to understand the Pacific Railway Scandal. He bore up under the strain wonderfully until Sir Hugh Allan's letters appeared, but they proved too much for him, and reason was dethroned. If all political reading is carefully kept out of his way he may recover."

The doctor didn't have time to go through with me himself, so he handed me over to two of the attendants.

"Been in London before?" said one of them.

"No," I replied, "it's my first visit. Beautiful country around here."

"Yes; good farming land. The farmers here get quite wealthy."

"Indeed," said I. "In that event they put on considerable style, I suppose?"

"They do, especially the women folks. You just ought to see how gay some of 'em rig out."

"Well, can you tell me what kind of dress would be most appropriate for a wealthy farmer's wife?"

"No, I don't know."

"Why, a *gros grain* (grow grain) silk, of course."

Thus by carefully leading up to the subject I obtained a chance to get off a conundrum that had been on my mind a long time.

The men didn't laugh or even smile. They looked at me pityingly, and whispered to each other.

When we had about completed our tour of inspection, one of them said to me.

"You'll do the sulphur bath before you leave here, I suppose?"

"Why should I do it when the proprietor's *Dunnett* already," I replied. "I must be off now, Good afternoon."

"Oh, you needn't be in a hurry; you may just as well make up your mind to stay," replied one of them bolting the door.

"What do you mean?" said I. "Great heavens, you cannot intend to detain me. You are mistaken, upon my word you are. I'm quite sane, I assure you. Ask Dr. Lett."

"Oh, yes, they all say the same. You can't put that story off on us. You've given enough evidence of lunacy by your remarks to us, and a nice scrape we'd get into if we were to let you out."

"This is an outrage," I exclaimed. "I insist on seeing the doctor or Mr. Mathieson."

"They're both gone to town and won't be back till evening, so you may just as well make yourself comfortable."

And they looked me up. I was not released for several hours, until the doctor returned and assured

my custodians that I was in my senses.

Moral—Never make conundrums in a lunatic asylum. Any number of people have been shut up all their lives on far slighter evidence of insanity.

JIMUEL BRIGGS, D. B.,
Graduate of Cobocoonk University.

Toronto, July 10th.

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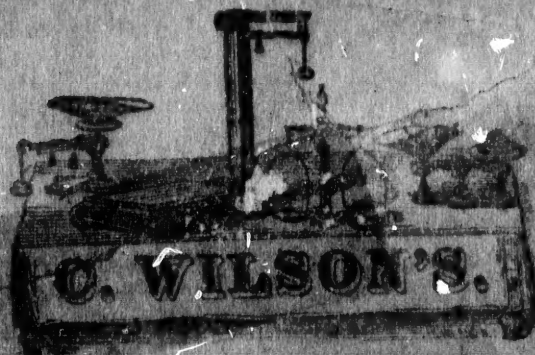
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